

LIPTON IN LATIN AMERICA NEW EQUIPMENT REPORT
SPECIAL EFFECTS FILTERS HOW TO FILM A BATTLE SCENE

SUPER8FILMAKER

VOLUME EIGHT NUMBER EIGHT

MARCH 1987 \$1.50 UK 75P

FEATS OF CLAY: ALL ABOUT CLAY ANIMATION





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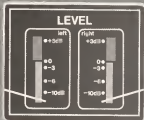
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GENERATION OF SUPER8

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Bauer S209XL

... "QUALITY WRITTEN ALL OVER IT."

MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY

The technical staff of Modern Photography took a thorough look at the Bauer S 209 XL, and liked what they saw. The test results are reprinted in their entirety below:

EQUIPMENT REPORT

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS:

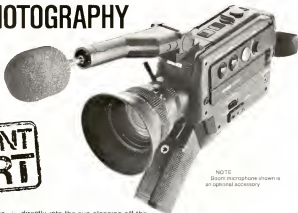
Bauer S 209 XL super 8 sound camera
LENS/VIEWING: 6.51mm f/1.2, focusing to 5 ft. (1.5m), to lens surface in macro mode. Through-lens viewing and focusing on split-image circle within aerial screen. Aperture scale, signals for under/over-exposure, sound monitor, film run, end-of-film.
EXPOSURE/FILM DRIVE: Through-lens auto exposure, full manual override, 1 stop "backlight" adjustment, 18 and 24 fps, 40 fps slow motion button, plus single frame, intervalometer 6 fps-1 fpm. Powered by six AA alkaline batteries in grip.
SOUND SYSTEM: Recording head and stabilizer, two-position ALC for "high" and "low," omnidirectional microphone, headset earphones.
OTHER: Remote, picture/sound fade, flash contact, screw-in plastic lens shade, folding grip.

TEST RESULTS: Bauer's 6.51mm f/1.2 Macro-Neovision zoom measures little more than 2 1/2 in. in length. Can a compact 8.5:1 ratio zoom lens that extends to the critical 6mm focal length make the grade when faced with our resolution targets? The lens, in fact, excels, and provides very good definition overall. Flare is very well controlled, even when shooting into bright, reflective subjects or

directly into the sun glancing off the tops of buildings. In the macro mode, we obtained excellent resolution with little edge distortion after shooting screen-filling close-ups of a watch, paper clips, type on a page and other items. In one grueling extreme close-up of a person's face, we could practically count lip hairs, not flatter- ing but certainly effective. And this was not with the fine-grained Kodachrome 40 but with Ektachrome 160.

Recorded sound is above average, voices are clean and natural-sounding. In an environment of high ambient noise, however, it's best to choose the "low" position of the ALC (there's no manual sound override) and get the microphone within 1 ft. of your speaking subject. A better bet might be to replace the omnidirectional microphone that comes with this camera, and is quite sensitive to background and camera noise, with a unidirectional mike. Bauer offers its own accessory clip-on boom mike that extends far forward of the lens, or you can choose any number of quality cardioid microphones that can be adapted with the proper jack.

The Bauer S 209 XL has quality written all over it and this extends even to the earphones. That's right: Instead of the little earplugs that come with the most super 8 sound cameras, Bauer includes a light-



NOTE:
Boom microphone shown is
an optional accessory.

weight airline-type head set with comfortable rubber cup tips as a standard item.

Instead of being fashionably in line with the trend toward lightweight sound machines, this Bauer model is a substantial—but not overweight—handful for the serious amateur. High quality of image, generous zoom ratio where it counts, and above-average sound are what this camera is all about. Automatic fade of picture and sound, and the built-in intervalometer are welcome extras.

Bauer can't be beat for quality and value. We invite you to take a thorough look at the Bauer S 209 XL at your Bauer dealer, or write for complete information.

BAUER

RIC AIC Photo, Inc. Carle Place, N.Y. 11514

CIRCLE INFOCARD 10

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Paul M. Sheptow

Associate Publisher
Editorial Director
Pennfield Jensen

Editor
Richard J. Jantz

Associate Editor
Frances Christie

Art Director
Brian Dessin Day

Editorial Consultants
Bruce Anderson
Dennis Duggan
Bob Settineri

Contributing Editors
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Michael D. LaRochelle
Lenny Lipton
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Jim Pjper
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Administrative Assistants
Laurie J. Armetta
Eric Knorr
Janet Nevill

Advertising Director
Elia Rodriguez

Editorial and
Advertising Offices
609 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 543-8020

Subscription Inquiries
Super-8 Filmmaker
Cinema Circle
Marion, OH 43302

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Editor Jantz and friend discuss clay animation.

Editor's Page

Two of the hottest animation techniques in recent years have been rotoscoping and clay animation. Since we told you all about rotoscoping last year (Vol. 7, No. 4/1979), this time we're treating you to feats of clay magic. If you aren't already familiar with this highly creative style of three-dimensional object animation, we think you're in for a genuine surprise.

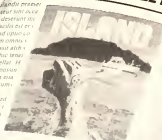
Clay animation's current popularity started building at least five years ago, when *Closed Mondays*, an 8-minute theatrical release, won the 1975 Academy Award for animation. One of the most remarkable sequences in this film by Bob Gardiner and Will Vinton is the transformation of a clay sculpture—an exotic-looking machine with two VU meters for eyes and a large pair of lips—into a melange of marvelously modeled clay objects, including a multicolored hand, a television set and a talking bust of Albert Einstein. Words cannot describe this visual rollercoaster of clay metamorphosis.

Gardiner and Vinton have individually continued animating clay (Will Vinton Productions' *The Little Prince and Friends* is the first full length "Claymation" feature) and their high caliber work has greatly influenced others to push clay in front of their cameras. This issue's cover story, by filmmakers Paul Boyington and Carrell McCarthy, tells you how to animate clay yourself and kicks off a pixillated potpourri on professional animators who like to play with clay. You'll read about Boyington Productions' *King Tut Goes to McDonald's*, "an underground clay animation classic," according to Bob Gardiner, as well as Gardiner's latest ventures in clay. You'll find out that Bruce Bickford's clay animation is featured prominently in Frank Zappa's crazy new film, *Baby Snakes*. And you'll even discover how two Super-8 filmmakers used Play-doh clay to create a frivolous fad called *The Mr. Bill Show*.

In other stories, Lenny Lipton offers extracts from his journal on traveling to Super-8 film festivals in Latin America, and we preview some of the exciting new Super-8 filmmaking equipment introduced at the 1980 Photokina Show in Germany. You'll be reading a lot more about the sophisticated space age Super-8 equipment in this magazine throughout the coming year. It looks like it's going to be a great time for independent filmmakers everywhere . . . Happy New Year! □

Richard Jantz

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CIRCLE INFOCARD 67

FEATURES

Basics Workshop: Dramatic Coverage: The Whole Story 15

Jim Piper

To set your audience quivering at the tense climax of your dramatic film requires careful thought beforehand. Jim Piper gives you practical tips for covering both the inevitable build-up and that final release of tension.

FEATS OF CLAY 18

This year's special holiday treat is an inside look at the wonderful, wacky world of clay animation. There's certainly something in the way it moves...

The Agony and Ecstasy of Clay Animation 19

Carrell McCarthy and
Paul Boyington

Animating clay might sound like child's play, but it's a painstaking process. After spending 11 months making *King Tut Goes to McDonald's*, a clay animation underground classic, Boyington Productions offers tips on how to start simple and stay sane.

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Gerald Fialka

The Agony of Mr. Bill (Oh Nooooo!) 23

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Bob Gardiner: Sculptor 24

Extraordinaire

Richard Jantz

Photokina '80: Space Age Super-8 28

Europe's biggest photographic equipment show, Photokina, celebrated its 30th anniversary in Cologne, Germany. Here's a preview of the exciting and sophisticated Super-8 equipment that was showcased.

"The Pope of Super-8": Lipton's Latin America Journal 34

Lenny Lipton

Contributing editor Lenny Lipton had a high time south of the border when he



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visited two Super-8 film festivals—one in Brazil, one in Venezuela. His journal reveals a very personal interpretation of the scene at both events.

Sneak Preview: Special Effects Films 41

William Wind

Half the fun of watching stupendous disasters in movies comes from trying to figure out what was faked and what was real. William Wind turns you on to collecting special effects movies so you can find out just how they did it.

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Cover: When we asked filmmaker Paul Boyington to create a sculpture that depicted the wild and witty world of clay animation, we had no idea what to expect. To see his total vision, turn to page 18. What a feat! (Photography by Dennis Battencourt)

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When you get to be a better moviemaker, you won't have to buy a new camera.

Attach the zoom microphone, and sound is electronically monitored so it becomes possible to adjust for optimum recording levels, either automatically or manually.



The automatic focus module electronically computes the distance between camera and subject and automatically sets the lens, so you always get clear, sharp pictures, even when you shoot fast-moving objects.

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Attach a zoom microphone, and sound is electronically monitored so it becomes possible to adjust for optimum recording levels, either automatically, or manually.

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Snap on the CM2 module, and you can fade both picture and sound in and out. Control bass to brighten sound. Shoot fast and slow motion. And control functions manually for complete creative control.



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control modules, you can do things with a camera that you probably thought only professional camera people could do.

But even without modules, the MS45 is advanced. It is a low-light, sound camera with an f/1.2 macro lens, complete electronic exposure, a 4 to 1 power zoom, and our dichroic focusing system.

It's compact, lightweight, and has a folding grip.

And it has a viewfinder that shows you everything you need to know to shoot great movies, even before you roll any film.

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CIRCLE INFOCARD 11



Rock-it Box

Rock-it Box camera operator, Martin Guigui, is shown filming a new wave band.

The Next Wave?

Ackerman and Freed, a Vermont-based film production company, and Star Video Productions, a California-based home video distributor, both see home video as the entertainment wave of the future. But, they're both using Super-8 to get there!

Rock-It Box. Ackerman and Freed's first, full-length film, was shot entirely in Super-8 and transferred to video for eventual distribution to the home video market (see "Video-8" for details on their transfer process).

According to director Ralph Ackerman, "We're making for a few thousand dollars what others couldn't touch for less than a few hundred thousand. Super-8 with direct sound is about one-tenth the expense of 16mm film."

SUPER-8 FILMAKER. contributing editor Michael LaRochelle also thinks Super-8 is the ideal, creative medium for distribution in home video cassettes or discs. LaRochelle wants to showcase the best Super-8 films he can find as a complete 60-90 minute movie montage (*à la* *Groove Tube* and *Tunnel-Vision*). His company, Star Video, is now seeking Super-8 films and will negotiate home video rights with individual filmmakers. Contact Star Video Productions, P.O. Box 23336, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523.

Super-8 and the Shah

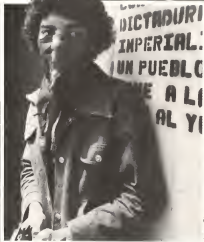
Venezuelan filmmaker Julio Neri scored quite a film coup when he was in Panama last January. He filmed—in Super-8—an exclusive interview with the late Shah of Iran, possibly the last footage ever shot of the Shah. Neri was in Panama to shoot *El Hacedor de Milagros* (*The Miracle Maker*) about a psychic healer (watch for an account of Neri's 35mm blow-up in a future issue of **SUPER-8 FILMAKER**), when he thought to ask Panama's Chief of Security if he could interview the exiled Shah.

Although the interview was finally allowed and Neri managed to get some exclusive footage of the Shah and his wife, what actually transpired was a Hitchcockian scenario of suspense and intrigue. Iranian top brass and other security agents interrogated Neri and his associates, rooms were searched and lives were threatened.

After a safe return to Caracas, however, Neri realized that he and his associates had been suspected of involvement in an assassination plot on the Shah's life. They were all lucky to be alive. Now Neri is planning to make a fictionalized documentary based on his experience filming one of the world's notoriously rich and powerful men—in Super-8, of course.



The late Shah of Iran and the Empress Farah Diba.



John Chapman

Revolutionary Filmmaking

In 1979, when American television crews and 16mm filmmakers evacuated Nicaragua after ABC newsmen Bill Stewart was killed by the National Guard, Super-8 filmmaker John Chapman stayed on and kept filming. Chapman was determined to document the downfall of the Somoza regime and the revolutionary victory of the Sandinistas.

The result is *Nicaragua 1979. Scenes From The Revolution*, an incredible 30-minute film that depicts the conditions that led a whole nation to revolt and includes the first 100 days of Nicaragua's reconstruction. **SUPER-8 FILMAKER** will soon publish an exclusive interview with John Chapman for an inside look at his historical achievement in Super-8—a film that has already been shown at the Edinburgh, Telluride, San Francisco and Mannheim International Film Festivals, and on European television.

Visual History

The World of Film and Filmmakers is another large format, coffee-table movie book that is a joy to peruse, admire and eventually study. Like its perfect companion *The Book of Movie Photography* ("Take One," Vol. 8, No. 7/1980), this book is a British product being marketed in the U.S. by a major publisher. Well and lavishly illustrated, with a factual but unobtrusive text edited by Don Allen, *World* takes you through a rigorous course on how

movies are made—with charts, graphs and photos—while simultaneously amusing you with Hollywood nostalgia.

For a primer in Hollywood demystification or an analysis of the film biz around the globe, *World* is a compendium of every salient fact you need (or think you need) to be an expert on film. A must book for the movie buff in you or in your life. For \$19.95. Crown Publishers, One Park Ave., New York, NY 10016. □

Sounds in the Dark

A recent fiasco while filming produced two completely black rolls of unusable film. Unusable, that is, except for the sound track. I spliced some of the imageless film into my silent movie of our vacation, both as leader and as a link between scenes. By recording appropriate sound effects onto the black film—carousel music before scene at amusement park, splashing sounds to precede shots of swimming pool—I've produced very effective sound transitions.

I'm also planning to use several seconds of imageless sound at the beginning of my feature on freeway commuting, and I've already taped a traffic report from a local radio station in anticipation. So, even if you make what seems like a disastrous mistake, there are ways to make use of it.

Jim Higgins
Galveston, TX

Order, Order!

My movie library contains about fifty 400- and 200-foot reels. To keep track of what's where, I use a loose-leaf memo book (6- by 3½-inches) to describe the scenes on each reel of film. On the side of each reel can, I tape the number corresponding to the page in the book where the scenes are described. An index listing the contents alphabetically by subject makes the job of locating footage even easier.

C.A. Peterson
Nelson, B.C., Canada

Blood and More Blood

Blood and gore comes easy with my method of achieving highly realistic gunshot wounds to the head and face. First you prepare your blood mixture. We used red latex paint, water and red food coloring (see also "Special Effects," Vol. 6, No. 2/1977 for Rod Eaton's suggested recipes). Blow up a round 7-inch balloon until it's almost at its maximum size and introduce the blood by using a bottle with a small opening.

Having sealed the balloon, tape it onto the back of the victim's

head so that it can't be seen from the front. A thumbtack or sharp object is placed on the wall behind the actor, with the sharp point facing outward. An assistant stands just out of camera range with a large drinking straw holding a cotton ball soaked in blood mixture. When the director gives the signal, the cotton ball is blown onto the victim's face. The victim immediately moves back when he feels the cotton ball so that the thumbtack can burst the balloon in an explosion of gore. One thing he has to be careful about is that he doesn't move his head back right against the thumbtack.

The final touch is to have the victim slide down the wall leaving



a trail of blood. As our blood mixture stains, be sure to wash everything out immediately after you've finished filming.

Brent Lestage
New Bedford, MA

Projectionist's Kit

In the past few years, I've shown my films to many different groups, carrying my projector into small communities in the hinterlands of America. Inevitably, while showing my movies, I've had breakdowns. To prevent the nervous variety, and to kick the need for tranquilizers, I've devised my own projectionist's "handy-dandy minor movie breakdown kit." In this little kit-bag I carry take-up reel and extension cords, an extra projector lamp, a tape film splicer for on-the-spot repairs, a camel-hair brush, a can of compressed air, a roll of masking tape, a penlight and an AC adaptor to screw into a regular light socket should I

need an outlet. Along with this, I take about ten feet of film leader—my Super-8 projector's automatic threading mechanism has developed a voracious appetite for film leader after all these years. Sometimes it even gets a craving for pieces of real, live film. It's then that I usually induce vomiting with a shot of canned air into the gate.

James Nartker
Napoleon, OH

But Don't Get (Hick!) Drunk

One of your readers recommended fast food and candy containers for use as spaceship parts, after eating the contents. I have a similar suggestion for satisfying several needs at the same time. Eat the potato chips or potato sticks which come in those cardboard cylinders. Empty or drink the whisky (if you're over 21) that also comes in cardboard cylinders. Now you'll have two containers for those 50-foot reels on which you store film-to-be-edited, extra film leader or odds-and-ends. The containers come with plastic lids to keep out dust and dirt.

J.D. Harnum
Markham, Ontario, Canada

Book Plug

I'd like to recommend a great book to filmmakers who have advanced beyond the amateur stage and are beginning to think seriously about their filmmaking techniques. It's *How to Shoot a Movie Story: The Technique of Pictorial Continuity* by Arthur L. Gaskill and David A. Englander (Morgan & Morgan). I stumbled across this book about eight years ago and it's been a constant companion on filmmaking forays ever since. My copy is now dog-eared, tattered and torn, but the information inside is as good as new.

Charles F. Galan
Whittier, CA

Smoke Gets in Your . . .

To illustrate the after-effects of a laser on its victim, we wanted a startling effect. I hit upon the idea of having the actor take a drag on a cigarette just before the

take and hold the smoke in his mouth. When the camera rolled, he simply opened his mouth without exhaling. The smoke dramatically curled into the air, creating the impression that our character had been cooked from the inside out!

Tim Whitcher
Adrian, MI

Incarnate Advice

I'd like to offer a way to avoid corrosion in battery compartments of cameras, portable tape recorders and similar equipment.

Cut a small circle of foam rubber of the appropriate dimensions to be inserted within the battery tension spring. Before inserting it, saturate the foam with vaseline petroleum jelly or medium grade lubricating oil. Also put a layer of the same corrosion preventative substance on the metal battery contact. This will ensure that battery compartment corrosion will be greatly reduced, and that the conductivity of the contacts will always be reliable.

Jack E. Burgessson
Cheltenham, Victoria,
Australia

Mere Putty

I have found an excellent way to produce a stop-motion animation figure using pliable wire, a special kind of putty and some paint. The wire can be taken from a coat-hanger. The putty is the black-greyish kind found in hardware stores and used for waterproof sealing around car windows. It never dries out completely. Decide on your figure and make a wire skeleton. Then play with the putty to soften it and wrap it around the wire in the form you want. When completed, paint it.

Years later, it will still be pliable enough to manipulate or dismantle.

Frank Ramirez
Windsor, Ontario

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If Only . . .
I would like to see a fine Super-8 camera with a plug-in remote control that would allow you to operate the zoom, fade and dissolve buttons, interval timer and main drive button. The control could have "piano" keys like a cassette recorder, and would be fixed to your tripod. I have a camera which "jiggles" when I press the fade and zoom buttons and remote control operation would certainly help!

Steven Satterfield
Pocatello, ID

A Sorry Tale

If there's any benefit from personal misfortune, it's to share the experience so that others may avoid a similar disaster. Two years ago, I filmed a family reunion in the beautiful Colorado Rockies. Last July, I intended to premiere the film in Nebraska. We flew from San Luis Obispo to Los Angeles to Denver, checking four pieces of luggage, including projector and original film.

We arrived in Denver safely, but neither projector or film did. Through the airlines' tracing services, we established that the projector was either lost or stolen at Los Angeles International Airport. The lesson is *not* to pack film and projector together or identify shipping container as photographic equipment. Do hand carry original film, declare excess valuation on equipment, pack lamp separately, pick up baggage at each transfer point, record all serial numbers in two separate places, engrave some ID number on equipment and place your name on several sides of the shipping box.

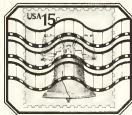
Don Baker
Atascadero, CA

Misinformed

One of your readers in the "Letters" column of Vol. 8, No. 3/1980 offered a totally confusing explanation of Panavision. He stated that it was a camera and not a widescreen system. The word Panavision is both the registered trademark name of the Panavision Corporation and their

widescreen anamorphic lens system. When a motion picture's credits read "Filmed in Panavision," the movie has been filmed with a 2.35:1 widescreen lens system. When the credits read "Cameras by Panavision," the movie has been filmed using a Panavision camera such as the Panaflex camera, which can film in any one of the following aspect ratios: 1.33:1, 1.85:1 or 2.35:1.

The Panavision anamorphic lens (2.35:1) squeezes the image by a ratio of 2:1 on the film and when projected through a scope lens, unsqueezes the image out across the screen. This system uses the whole film frame. 1.85:1 works by cutting the top and bottom of the picture and then blowing up



the picture to fit the height of the screen. For TV, 1.85:1 can be used with just a slight blow-up to cover the TV picture with very little loss of film information on the sides. Anamorphic film on TV requires a scan of the entire picture, since it's almost three times longer horizontally than a flat picture. So it must optically run along the frame to catch the action.

Before your reader proselytizes his professional career in film, I suggest he do a bit more learning. The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, 9 E. 41st St., New York, NY 10017, will answer any questions on motion pictures.

Nat Bruzese
Motion Picture Operator
Cinemart Theatre
Forest Hills, NY

21st Century Technology

I was most interested to read

Lenny Lipton's article on Super-8 in the classroom (Vol. 8, No. 4/1980). I run a highly successful Super-8 program for 5th graders in a New York City school (Public School 205, 6701 20th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11204), where we teach animation and live action filmmaking. We were the only elementary school to be chosen to show films at the State Youth Film/Media Show, and Exxon has awarded us a grant for a program in which children film an animated version of their independent reading selections (instead of writing a book report).

I'd like to invite other teachers to get in touch with us—we'd supply simple lesson plans and bibliography for starting their own filmmaking programs, if they are interested. We're proud of our program that teaches "21st Century" children to communicate with the tools of 21st Century technology, and would like to share it.

Bruce Rothenberg
Matawan, NJ

Those Were The Days

You may find this ridiculous, even insane—everyone else does—but I'd like to process my Super-8 film myself. I've looked into it but I've come across two stumbling blocks. First, no one will share the process with me. A nearby processing lab told me it's their *trade secret*! Second, I can't find reasonable equipment. Although cheap, portable gear for processing 16mm is available, there's nothing for Super-8 short of machines that cost a fortune and fill a room. The pioneers of documentary film traveled the globe with their cameras, processing film along the way. It's too bad Super-8 filmmakers can't do the same thing.

Sakari Aaltonen
Helsinki, Finland

But they can! Superior Bulk Film, 442 N. Wells St., Chicago, IL 60610, offers a Super-8 Daylight Tank for processing Ektachrome and black-and-white film. The price is a modest \$19.90.—Ed.

Optical Inspiration

Dennis Duggan's proclivity for inspiring interest in Super-8 was never better demonstrated than in his article about the ecstasies of optical printing (Vol. 8, No. 1/1980). He convinced me, and I'm now the cowed owner of one of J-K Engineering's threatening machines. I shall persevere though, in spite of all the talk about color balancing, etc. I enjoy Dennis's work, let's see more of it.

John W. St. Marie
Leucadia, CA

A Fair Hearing

It was with great alarm that I read the "Letters" section in your Sept/Oct issue (Vol. 8, No. 6/1980). Specifically, I'm talking about your advice to contact the Copyright Office in Washington, DC, for information on copyrights. You're advising the already used/abused/ravaged and pillaged Super-8 filmmaker to make use of the Copyright Office? The only copyright

officer you can trust is your mom!

In 1977 I wanted some information on copyrights. After three years, \$25, ten long-distance calls and three letters from my attorney, I have received . . . nothing.

Other people I've spoken with have reported similar experiences.

So please, your magazine is indispensable to me and I'm sure to many others. Continue to keep it that way and give your readers both sides of the coin.

Pamala Ross
Canton, OH

Students' Guide

Because of the high quality of your publication, we constantly recommend our students to read it, but unfortunately the larger part of them have problems with the translation. Even though many of them can speak, write and read English, they have trouble with some of the colloqui-

alisms and technical terms.

We know there is a great following for the magazine in Spanish-speaking countries, as our students come from many different countries. We'd like to suggest that a special Spanish edition would be very well received, and offer our assistance to this end.

Escuela Cinematografica
Americana
Buenos Aires,
Argentina

We appreciate your interest and offer of help. It's just not feasible at the present time to offer a special Spanish edition.

Perhaps you could compile a glossary of technical terms for your students to help them to understand the magazine better. —Ed.

Send letters to: Letters Editor SUPER-8
FILMMAKER, 608 Mission St., San Francisco, CA
94105. Be sure to include your name and address. We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity and clarity.

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Whether you're taking your first steps in Super-8, or have been part of this great hobby for years, Bauer cameras have what you need. They're ultra-fast, ultra-wide angle, uniquely capable cameras, with an exciting blend of features, quality and value that makes Bauer your super choice for Super-8 Sound.

Although each Bauer camera has its own unique personality, it's the things they share that set them apart from all the rest. Like a handsome, functional body design, human engineered for easy handling. And an exclusive Easy-Load system that makes it simpler than ever before to load a sound film cartridge into the camera. Plus, the extraordinary XL low-light filming ability of an f/2 zoom lens coupled with a 225° open shutter sector for pictures under lighting conditions where you couldn't shoot before.

Most important of all, they share the total commitment to excellence of design and quality construction that makes every Bauer product the better buy in Super-8.

Bauer S209XL. This professional-quality Super-8 Sound camera features a fantastic 8.5X zoom lens. It's a high quality Bauer Neovaron that ranges from an ultra-wide 6mm to a far reaching 51mm telephoto setting. Maximum aperture is f/2 for superb low-light performance. And that's not all. The S209XL also offers split-image, through-the-lens focusing, macro capability, three separate motors for zoom, film drive and sound capstan drive, and an intervalometer that allows exciting sequences from 6 frames per second down to 1 frame per minute.

- Plus, automatic exposure control with manual override, optical dissolve, 40 fps slow motion, backlight control, 1/11 flash outlet for double system sound, fade in/out. We even include as standard equipment things others sell as extras; remote release, headphones, slide copy adapter, lens hood and rubber eye cups. Super Super-8, indeed!

Bauer S207XL. If you want a really full-featured camera, but don't feel you need the 8.5X zoom range of the S209XL, consider the S207XL. It shares *all* of the features of the S209XL, but the S207XL is supplied with Neovaron 6.5X f/2 zoom lens, covering a range from 7-45mm, plus macro. It's a lot of camera!

Bauer S205XL. If you're just starting out in Super-8, we've got a quality Bauer camera for you, too. The S205XL offers a 5X Neovaron f/2 zoom lens covering a useful range from 8-40mm, plus most of the really important features of our other cameras. It's a high quality, high performance, lower cost camera that really proves that Bauer is the super buy in Super-8.

Whatever you need in Super-8 Sound, from simple, easy operation to fully professional features and sophistication, Bauer has a camera that's right for you. We've also got a full line of Super-8 silent cameras, and projectors that will show your sound or silent films with the optical and sound fidelity they deserve. See your nearest Bauer dealer for a hands-on demonstration, or write for full information.

BAUER



AIC Photo, Inc. Carle Place, N.Y. 11514



BAUER *SUPER* Super-8 SOUND!

Shooting a Super-8 Sound movie is really only half the job. It's the editing and additional recording that take place after your efforts come back from the lab that make a film into a production you can be proud to show. And, if the equipment you use for these final steps is not right for the job, the result can be less than it should for the effort you've put in.

These superb Bauer Super-8 Sound projectors are more than right. They have the features, and the quality, that your efforts deserve. And when your film is done, they'll help you present it to your audience with all of the optical and sound fidelity you could possibly want. Although each unit has its own special features, they share the most important feature of all — the excellence of design and the quality of construction that make every Bauer product the better buy in Super-8.

T174 Duoplay. This super-quiet projector features independent recording and combined playback of sound on both the main and balance stripes of the film. Which means that you can add music, or narration, or both to your films without fear of damaging the irreplaceable sounds recorded 'live' while filming. Our unique Duoplay feature sees to it that an ideal balance between tracks is maintained during playback. And you can record Sound-Over-Sound, too, with our variable record/erase feature. You also get 18 or 24 fps speeds, 600 foot reel

capacity, rapid rewind without unthreading film, and the smooth, kind to your film operation you'd expect from quality equipment like this. The Bauer T174 Duoplay projector — it's super Super-8, indeed!

T171. For super value in a Bauer super quality sound projector, here's the one to choose. This quiet running projector features automatic threading, 18 or 24 fps running speeds and our Sound-Over-Sound variable erase/record system for professional quality results. 600' reel capacity and rapid rewind without unthreading, too. If quality and value are the prime concerns, the T171 is a Bauer through and through.

Whatever you need in Super-8 Sound, from quiet, reliable operation to fully professional features and capabilities, Bauer has a projector that's right for you. We've also got a full line of Super-8 Sound and Silent cameras that will let you make your films with Bauer quality from the very first frame. See your nearest Bauer dealer for a hands-on demonstration, or write for full information.

BAUER

AIC AIC Photo, Inc. Carle Place, N.Y. 11514

I used Rod Eaton's "Special Effects" ideas (Vol. 7, No. 8/1979) to film an artificial blizzard. The effects look terrific, but the actors' faces are completely shadowed. What's gone wrong?

Arthur Menoquin, San Antonio, TX

Blizzards, real or artificial, create tricky exposure problems. Your "snow" illuminated by movie lights makes a highly reflective background for the actors, as does a "watery" backdrop of lake or sea. The camera's automatic exposure system will adjust for the brightness of the snow and underexpose the smaller objects in the frame, i.e., the actors' faces and bodies. To compensate, you can either use lights to "fill" in the actors' faces, or adjust the camera exposure manually. To set the correct exposure, focus so that the actor fills the frame and "lock" the meter setting (EE lock on camera), or take a light reading of the actor's face with a separate lightmeter and set exposure manually. Some cameras have a "backlight" adjustment that will compensate automatically.

What's the most powerful Super-8 telephoto zoom lens? My surveillance work needs something far greater than the 60mm, 8:1 zoom on my present camera.

William L. Ranson, Richmond, VA

The most powerful Super-8 telephoto lens comes on the Bauer S715XL Microcomputer camera. It's 6-90mm, an astonishing 15:1 zoom ratio. For professional surveillance work, you may want an even more powerful lens. Buy a camera with an interchangeable lens, such as the new Beaulieu 6008 S, or a Pathé Double Super-8 model, and mount 35mm still camera lenses on it. This gives you great flexibility as the range of these lenses is very wide. Filmmaker Dyanna Taylor filming in the Himalayas in 16mm used a 385mm lens to produce a spectacular tilt up the side of a mountain from 14,000 feet altitude to the summit at 26,000 feet—and showed the mountaineers at the top quite clearly.

For your purposes, try an 80-200mm zoom lens. Anything larger may require a special lens brace to support the extra weight. When filming, use a rock-steady tripod to produce sharp images with no "quiver." (See "Profiles," Vol. 5, No. 7/1977 for an account of using a 200mm lens on a Super-8 camera.)

I own a Canon 518 camera that only films at 18 and 36 fps (frames per second). Can I have it modified to run at 24 fps and single frame? Or would it be cheaper to buy another camera?

Mark Ruxton, Fresno, CA

We know of no one who will do such a modification, and it would certainly be expensive as you have guessed. Buying a second camera with features your pri-



mary lacks is a good investment. You'll have more versatility, be able to cover scenes with two cameras at once and have a back-up if your first camera should malfunction. Our "1980 Annual Sound Camera Buying Guide" in Vol. 8, No. 7/1980 offers a review of what's on the market.

I want to make a Barney (sound-proof cover) for my sound camera. Do I need to use lead sheeting to deaden sound? Where can I get this type of lead?

Ann Drumsdall, Eugene, OR

Lead is very dangerous to work with, and we don't recommend using it. Skin or eye irritation or lead poisoning can result from contact with this metal. Lead is heavy, and also not the most efficient means of blocking camera sound.

In his two-part article, "In Search of Supersound-8," Vol. 8, Nos. 2 and 3/1980, Dennis Duggan came up with a very effective solution to camera sound. His Barney was built in a "diaper" design, with three layers. The inside layer was wide-wale corduroy, the middle was deep pile bathroom carpet with non-skid rubberized backing and the outer layer was naphthalene or strong vinyl. Use Velcro strips to hold the Barney in place. The carpet pile lies toward the camera. Another lead-free design for a Barney appears in "Tools and Tricks," Vol. 4, No. 5/1976.

You can also take other precautions to help eliminate camera noise. When filming in a room with bare floors, drape the room with sound absorbent rugs or blankets. Use directional mikes and place them as far as possible from the camera and close to your actors. A good pair of earphones helps to monitor sound and makes sure you're not inadvertently recording camera operation.

When I showed a recently purchased movie on my Bell & Howell Soundstar XJ projector, the characters in the film sounded like chipmunks. What's causing the speed-up?

Steve Paul, Hoffman Estates, IL

Assuming you're not talking about a *Chip 'n' Dale* cartoon, you may be projecting a film shot at 18 frames per second (fps) at 24 fps. Many Super-8 films on the market aren't marked to indicate the correct running speed. The projector you mention has a variable speed control so you can adjust for minor speed differences that occur when different machines are used for recording and playback. If the film characters still sound like they should be gathering acorns, put your projector through its paces with Mark Mikolas's "How to Test Your Projector's Speed" (Vol. 7, No. 7/1979).

Query replies are prepared with the help of Bruce Anderson and Dennis Duggan.

BASICS WORKSHOP

Dramatic films need a clear visual perspective.
With good *coverage*, you can control the whole picture.



What makes the runaway car scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Family Plot* so effective, is that Hitchcock presents the frantic action from the passengers' (Barbara Harris, Bruce Dern) point of view.

The main difference between shooting coverage for a documentary film and for a dramatic film is that you can't completely control a documentary. You have to go along with what happens since an element of uncertainty and spontaneity hangs over the shoot.

In shooting a dramatic film, on the other hand, you can control what happens in the camera and in front of it—almost down to the frame and bat of an eyelash. Here are some pointers and common practices for you to keep in mind as you break down your script and plan for coverage.

Goals for Set-ups

Consider two goals as you plan your coverage: First, make sure that your overall list of shots gives viewers a clear visual perspective of the scene (by "scene" I mean a complete portion of the larger, dramatic

Dramatic Coverage: The Whole Story



story). Second, give yourself lots of choices for later on when you edit.

The simpler the scene, the fewer the camera/light set-ups you need. When more people, action, space and props are involved, you'll need more complex set-ups. One way to film set-ups that insures maximum flexibility for editing dialogue and action goes

something like this: To start, you film a *master shot* of the entire scene from beginning to end, revealed in a wide frame to show all the characters from head to foot and all the action. Then, you shoot a series of close-ups of each character, as he or she gives lines and reacts to other actors' lines. These follow-up close-ups also run the length of the entire scene. Thus, if you have three actors in a scene that runs three minutes on the screen, you'll need four shots—one master and three close-ups—all running three minutes. With coverage this thorough, you could cut the scene in a zillion different ways.

Practically speaking, however, we amateurs can't always afford to shoot this much film, so we "rough edit" on paper *before* a shoot and cut corners wherever possible. We decide, for example, that the master shot is only

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In *Honeysuckle Rose*, Bryan Cannon takes center stage during a concert to dramatically announce her break-up from Willie Nelson.

needed at the beginning and the end. We take short close-ups of the secondary characters at certain dramatic junctures in the scene, and save longer close-ups for the most important characters.

Variations on Coverage

There are lots of variations on this master and close-up shot approach. If the scene involves physical action, then close-ups might not serve as well as medium shots. If two characters of equal dramatic weight are closely positioned, a single medium shot will probably cover matters adequately.

Framing offers another approach to covering (telling) a dramatic story. Try placing one character in the background (BG), facing the camera, and the other person in the foreground (FG). If the FG figure's back is to the camera, attention will shift to the BG character. If the FG figure is shot in profile or facing the camera, he/she will command more attention than the person in the BG.

Focusing is another way to control the viewer's attention. When you shoot two characters in telephoto to achieve shallow depth of field, the character in focus is the one you mean to stress. If the script calls for a sudden shift of dramatic emphasis from one character to the other, you can quickly shift or *pull focus* from one person to another—a way of

"cutting" within the shot. You can also shoot both characters in wide angle and keep both in focus, if that serves your purpose.

Another technique to emphasize a character is to cut away from the person at the center of the action to another character on the edge of things. In *Honeysuckle Rose*, for example, Lily's infatuation with Buck is developed almost entirely through editing. Most of the footage stresses Buck (the lead singer in a band), but there are so many cuts to Lily (a guitar player) looking at Buck that viewers know something is up.

The Dynamics of Movement

For covering movement, your basic options are to follow the subject (moving camera) or let the subject move off frame (stationary camera). In the opening shots of *Honeysuckle Rose*, when the camera follows Buck playing golf, it's because he's more important than anyone or anything else he leaves behind, and because the filmmaker wants to reveal the location (an open country field) Buck moves across.

Think of the many ways you can set up your camera relative to the subject's movement. If you shoot moving *laterally*, walking or panning with the subject, you'll record an ever-changing background while the character stays

the same size (more or less) in the frame. If the subject moves away from camera, viewers' attention will shift from the character to his or her destination. Shoot your subject moving toward the camera and the destination will remain unseen.

Subjective Shots

Dramatic films usually include shots that represent the point of view (POV) of a character in the story. The inclusion of these POV or subjective shots is an important device for developing character and for shaping viewers' attitudes toward the people in your story.

The usual procedure to create a strong, subjective mood is to film

"In shooting a dramatic film, you can control what happens in the camera and in front of it."

a tight shot of the character observing, then reacting. After this, you shoot what the character sees—the POV shot—filmed from where the character stands or sits. If the character is moving when she or he observes, the camera ought to move too. (Alfred Hitchcock's films almost always contain some intriguing, moving POV shots.) Finally, you cut the first shot in two, observing and reacting, and splice the POV shot in between.

Natural Cutting Points

The question arises, how long should these takes last? At what point do you yell "Cut!" and why? The two-fold answer: At a natural break in the dialogue/action; or, a point when you need a new set-up because the character being filmed has passed through a door or around a corner. A well-written scene should have several dramatic high points to serve as cues for cutting shots. It's exactly this kind of control you can exercise over a dramatic film that will increase your odds for success. ☐

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FEATS OF CLAY

Clay animation is transforming from simple fun into a most beguiling style of film art. And it's popping up everywhere! On television, in movie theaters and even at Super-8 film festivals, clay animation is firmly in vogue.

SUPER-8 FILMAKER recently put out its feelers in the direction of several filmmakers who are currently animating clay. Some do it as a business, others do it for fun. Many animators are hopelessly addicted to pushing clay for artistic reasons. Here, then, is our report on, and salute to, the current rage in animation: Feats of Clay.

CARRELL MCCARTHY AND PAUL BOYINGTON

The Agony And Ecstasy Of Clay Animation

Sure, clay animation is a strange way to get your kicks. It can be an agonizingly slow and tedious process. But it's also an exhilarating way to visually capture the essence of human nature.

On film, clay characters have an uncanny knack of appearing "more human than human." This is because you can emphasize and exaggerate each part of a facial expression—such as a crinkling forehead, wrinkling mouth, moving eyebrows and flaring nostrils.

But perhaps the most unique aspect of this animation technique is the ability of clay to change into different shapes: a process known as *metamorphosis*. Since clay is three-dimensional, these transformations are especially exciting to see. The images are tangible, offering concrete shapes and textures for your audience to savor with delight.

While filming our own 20-minute clay animation, *King Tut Goes to McDonald's*, we exploited the metamorphosis technique more than once. During one scene in a clay mobile home, a woman is talking to her husband when suddenly, large red cones emerge from a pop art painting on the wall behind them. The cones wrap around her head and grotesquely wrench it off! (No blood, mind you.) Then a plant with a big eye sprouts from the woman's headless neck while the painting changes into a red field with a flock of birds bursting through it. As the woman's flower head changes into Mr. Peanut, the painting blossoms into a clay breast. Finally, after transforming back into her original self, the woman acts as though nothing has happened.

CLAY MAGIC

To perform your own clay sorcery, you'll need a variety of ma-



Clay sculpture: Paul Boyington and Carrell McCarthy. Photograph: Carrell McCarthy

terials, depending on the complexity of your project. The nature of your story will help determine the filming equipment, setup, budget and amount of time and assistance you'll need.

Novice clay animators should always start with a short, simple idea. It's best to have a script to

follow; even a one-page outline can help you pre-solve many of the problems you'll encounter during filming. You may also find it useful to storyboard the principal action or scenes.

A cautionary tip: Watch out for excessive dialogue when writing your script. Otherwise, during

production you'll wind up deleting lines or even whole pages when you find that it's taking five hours to animate one line.

For simple clay animation, you'll need a camera (with single-frame capability), film, tripod, some photoflood lights and your clay objects. However, if you get into elaborate sets, special effects and fancy lighting, you'll need more supplies and your costs can escalate rapidly. But remember that since much of the beauty of clay animation derives from the way one object can metamorphosize into another, you can always emphasize this aspect of your animation and cut back on the frills.

"CASTING" YOUR CHARACTERS

Since many varieties of clay exist, experiment with different types to find out what works best for your needs. The standard modeling clay available in art supply stores is fairly conducive to animation since it's easy to sculpt, comes in several colors and won't dry up under hot lights. Bake-hard clay is great to use for stationary objects.



Upon his discovery of the great golden arches in modern America, King Tut has a religious experience.

CARRELL MCCARTHY AND PAUL BOYINGTON

King Tut Goes To McDonald's

It started with a one-liner, a shed in the Pacific Northwest, a lot of clay and an unrelenting sense of humor. Inspired by animation wizards like Bob Gardiner and Will Vinton, who were pushing clay before the camera like it had never been pushed before, we decided to try our luck at clay animation.

A year later, *King Tut Goes to McDonald's* had erupted into a 20-minute, 16mm animation exploring the comic aspects of ancient Egypt, King Tut hawkers (the Tut exhibit had just come to America), the oil crisis, fast food chains, mobile home trailer parks and even included a prophetic nuclear meltdown—long before the Three Mile Island incident.

We decided to promote and distribute *King Tut* independently and began by sending a whimsical

brochure to movie theaters in every major city throughout the country. The results were excellent and *King Tut* was soon booked on the same bill as *Harold & Maude*, *Rock 'n Roll High School*, *The Life of Brian*, *Death of a Bureaucrat*, *Despair* and even 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. It was also shown at the 1979 Seattle International Film Festival.

Looking back over the 11 months we spent bringing our *King Tut* satire to life, we often remember those moments bordering on insanity. But every time we sit in a darkened movie theater and hear an audience laugh at our R-rated animation, we know it was all worth it. □

King Tut Goes to McDonald's is available on film and videocassette from Boyington Film Productions, 470 Campbell Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134.



To create fine details in clay, try sculpturer's tools, found at art supply stores. Here Boyington is molding the weightlifter's face.

If you anticipate using a lot of clay, write to the manufacturers (such as Plasticine, Clayola, or Platalina Leisure Clay) in order to obtain bulk prices. Also, if you're not thrilled by the colors commercially available, you can



Here's this issue's cover art in its early stages. The wooden legs of the armatures are still visible.

melt clay in a double boiler and add oil-based pigments to attain richer colors. A little experimentation should provide you with what you need.

Most clay characters must be able to stand up for long periods of time—this usually means short, chunky legs and large feet. But, for the best possible results, use metal or wire-and-wood armatures, which are inner skeletons that enable clay figures to be strong yet flexible. Armatures are available from animation suppliers (like Stop-Frame Enterprises, 3131 Turtle Creek Blvd., Dallas, TX 75219) or from your own workshop ("How to Build Ball-and-Socket Armatures," Vol. 4, No. 5/1976).

We use ball-and-socket armatures similar to those made by clay animation filmmaker Bob Gardiner (see Gardiner's article in *American Cinematographer*, April, 1978). With pen set, ball joints and copper tubing welded together, our characters were allowed maximum flexibility. Styrofoam balls can serve as the core for your character's head and glass beads make great eyes.

To keep these clay figures well anchored to the floor of your set, try Plexiglas as the base for their feet. By using predrilled holes in the floor, you can put screws through the Plexiglas feet to keep your actors under control. This may sound like a lot of work, but you'll actually save time by keeping your characters from falling

over and ruining the shot, as well as smashing in their faces.

Even if your actors don't fall over, you'll still find it necessary to repair and resculpt their clay exoskeletons due to the constant handling between shots.

"To get a real feel for movement, you might want to shoot a live-action reference film."

Scale. It's advisable to work on a large scale rather than a small one. By small, we mean clay figures less than ten inches tall. But as long as you can animate the expressions on your characters' faces, which should change when there's dialogue, your scale will be adequate.

CONSTRUCTING YOUR SETS

Since your clay characters dwell in a world of their own, you can take that world as far as your imagination (and budget) can go. You may want to construct miniature sets with flats, back-grounds, props and other details. Just remember that an excessive amount of attention to detail can sometimes be in vain. You may spend countless hours agonizing over tiny blades of clay grass only to find that it doesn't even show up in the final shot.

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GERALD FIALKA

Frank Zappa's *Baby Snakes*

To multi-media artist Frank Zappa, clay animation juxtaposed with live action renders a vibrancy he dubs "the ultimate carnival of the eye." In *Baby Snakes*, his new theatrical film, Zappa proves his claim by including some of the most remarkable metamorphic clay animation you'll ever see.

"*Baby Snakes* is a movie about people who do stuff that is NOT NORMAL," says Zappa, the musical mastermind who created the Mothers of Invention—a psychedelic '60s rock group. At a cost of a half-million dollars, Zappa's 163-minute cinematic carnival offers something for everyone: animation, live music, strange dialogue, gas masks, Frenchy the Poodle, Ms. Pinky's larger sister, New York's finest crazies and even a killer hamburger.

Ever since Zappa began shooting *Regular-8* in 1958, he has been actively exploring visual media. Using his father's movie camera, young Zappa would run around the backyard like a maniac, spinning in circles. The colorful swirling image that resulted on film was further altered with ink, nail polish and air brushing.

Zappa's first feature, *200 Motels* (1970), a dazzling orgy of optical effects, was the first theatrical

Frank Zappa uses clay animation in *Baby Snakes*, his latest theatrical release.

movie to be transferred from original videotape to film. In 1974, Zappa produced an hour television special, *A Token of His Extreme*, in which concert footage was combined with the clay animation of artist Bruce Bickford.

In Zappa's latest movie, Bickford has developed an exceptional style of clay animation, characterized by imaginative insights and meticulous detail. For one scene in *Baby Snakes*, Bickford constructed over 30 different clay figures to illustrate a man shrinking inside a car. In another clay scene, two men are watching a movie when suddenly—one guy's head turns into a hamburger patty. The hamburger turns to the other man and begins to eat him, while a building starts growing in the background. Soon dozens of tiny



Clay animator Bruce Bickford prepares clay faces for use in Frank Zappa's *Baby Snakes*.

cars, about the size of eraser crumbs, drive through the building entrance (now a disco). The homicidal hamburger continues to digest its victim and then . . . well, you get the idea.

"One of the NOT NORMAL people in the film," explains Zappa, "is Bruce Bickford, a person who animates lumps of clay and makes them do things you won't believe.

Zappa's creative challenges to the film medium are undeniable and a catalyst to all filmmakers. I highly recommend *Baby Snakes*, a film that is both a statement and a real good time. □

works fine for walls and 3/4-inch plywood makes a sturdy floor to support the set. Remember that a set with removable walls will enable you to easily maneuver the camera into a variety of positions.

Furniture and small props can be made out of clay, papier-mâché or small pieces of wood. Spray paint, flat latex or acrylic paints can provide additional colors. Air-brushed backdrops lend a tone of realism but clay backgrounds also have a nice effect. Nothing beats clay clouds moving across a clay sky.

CAMERA AND LIGHTING

For three-dimensional clay animation, you'll be filming from more of a live-action perspective than you would with cel animation. This means that all movement will be recorded by the camera, including camera shake. Therefore, it's imperative that your camera is securely anchored down. We prefer bolting the fluid head of a tripod directly onto our tabletop set. For smooth dolly shots, we use a custom-made camera mount system on a horizontal plane level with the tabletop.

Since the slightest nudge can throw your entire shot off, use a cable release to operate the camera. Keep all tripods taped down and be careful where you position your body during filming so you don't disturb the setup.

When shooting particularly complex scenes, you may find it practical to use two cameras to record the same action. Footage from two different angles or distances will provide you with a larger variety of shots to edit and will eliminate the need to reshoot the same scene for close-up, medium or long shots.

Lighting is a great tool for creating visual drama. As in painting, light can alter a mood and instigate an aura of suspense, joy or absurdity. By using different lights at various locations as you would for live action, you can make simple, animated movement much more exciting.

When Vance DeGeneres and Walter Williams teamed up in 1973, they were just two comedians looking for a break. Their fate finally came into focus when they began to work with Play-doh clay and a Super-8 camera.

Working as nightclub entertainers in New Orleans, DeGeneres and Williams began to show short, homemade Super-8 comedies as part of their act. This zany collection of films included *Cemetery City*, *Sky Devils*, *The Paranoid Parachutist*, *The Big Heist* and *Low and Order*.

Meanwhile, the NBC television network began accepting 8mm home movies for broadcast on its popular "Saturday Night Live" show. DeGeneres and Williams quickly decided to submit their Super-8 films to NBC. One of the shorts they sent was an off-the-wall, puppet-style animation called *The Mr. Bill Show*, featuring characters made of Play-doh.

A lot of time went by with no word from NBC, so Williams called John Head, a talent scout for the network. To his surprise, Head told him that the *Mr. Bill* film had been accepted and

would air soon on national TV. The first *Mr. Bill* Show subjected poor Bill to a smorgasbord of tragic comedy: a classic case of the little guy getting (literally) stepped on and messed over. And each time Bill's malleable body is antagonized, squashed or mutilated, we hear his thin, painful voice cry "Oh Nooooo!" Even Bill's pet dog, Spot, suffers the indignities of Sluggo and Mr. Hands—the real-life hands of DeGeneres reaching down onto the set to wreak havoc on the clay characters.

In another *Mr. Bill* film, Bill's first attempt at skydiving is as disastrous as a deep sea adventure in a boiling pot of water. Chin-up bars become as dangerous as a guillotine. When Mr. Hands brushes Bill's teeth, poor Bill is left with no face, and soon "Doctor" Sluggo is amputating Bill's leg—"Oh Noooooo!"

An audience following soon grew up around *The Mr. Bill Show* with Mr. Bill T-shirts, buttons, videocassettes and even a book. Thanks to Super-8 and two comic filmmakers, Mr. Bill became America's favorite disaster-prone star—turning Play-doh into real dough. □

J. DAVIS III

The Agony of Mr. Bill (Oh Nooooo!)



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Winning an Academy Award is a tough act to follow. But Bob Gardiner has continually produced extraordinary films since capturing an Oscar in 1975 for sculpting and animating *Closed Mondays*, with co-producer Will Vinton. Preferring the label of "sculptimator," Gardiner has created clay films for holography, network television and even political campaigns. Some of his best known work includes the animated "history of American comedy teams" sequence used for the *Shields and Yarnell* TV show (with cinematography and lighting by Doug Fellman) and the opening for the *Rolling Stone* magazine TV special.

Gardiner treats clay as a very special medium that's perfect for a highly palatable, animated filmmaking technique he calls "Plasticinemagraphics." Although it took roughly 14 months to shoot *Closed Mondays*, Gardiner still finds plasticine sculpting faster

and even cheaper than most other animation techniques. His plans for the future include producing a clay feature, *The Oregon Kid* (co-written with musician Mason Williams).



Bob Gardiner stands behind his remarkably detailed clay set, created for an album cover: *La Seine* by Tom Saefton on Ariola Records.

When I asked Gardiner what tips he could offer to novice clay animators, he advised, "Unless you have a good script and a good sound track, you'll be wasting your time animating clay. It's a painstaking process," he explained. "And don't let all the Zen out of your creation by telling everyone what you're going to do, just do it!" □

RICHARD JANTZ

Bob Gardiner: Sculptimator Extraordinaire

A new stereo camera from Photokina? Afraid not—it's a clay camera co-sculpted by Bob and Arthur Gardiner.



We use a combination of professional Colortran lights and conventional 250 and 500 watt (3200° K) photofloods. Although photofloods are inexpensive and available at most camera shops, they tend to burn less intensely the longer they're used, and this change in the lighting can show up in your film. A light meter or a more sophisticated lighting system (like Colortran, Lowel, Acme, etc.) will help you avoid this problem.

"Lighting is a great tool for creating visual drama."

Always be certain that all lights are secured firmly and that your setup is undisturbed.

Be aware: If the lighting becomes too hot, your clay figures may become soft and droopy. When this occurs, it's time to stop your shooting session. Just always be sure that any lights are secured firmly in place and that your setup will be undisturbed until the next session.

MOVEMENT: THE HEART OF ANIMATION

The style of your characters' movements will help determine the mood, motivation and meaning of your story in clay. To attain fluidity and accuracy once you start animating your characters' actions, you'll need to follow a rigid pattern for walking, sitting and for head or arm movements.

"Smooth" movement can usually be ensured by shooting two exposures for each change in a character's position. This is a standard animation technique called *shooting twos*. The extent of movement between every two frames will depend on the amount of time you want to spend and the results you're after. For starting out if you can take it slowly and have enough patience, try a 1/4-inch movement for each set of twos.

To get a real feel for movement, you might want to shoot a live-

Mark Bailey

Eric Hyatt

action *reference* film. As with flat cel rotoscoping, you can use a film editor or stop-motion projector to follow each frame as you animate. With this technique, you'll create much more realistic movement for your clay characters.

For our *King Tut* characters, we wanted a look bordering on realism and absurdity—but not cartoony. Using a mirror, we watched our own mouths form words as we animated our characters for lip synching. Actually, as long as a clay actor's mouth opens when a word starts and closes when it ends, it'll probably work. That's another beauty of clay animation; you can get away with being a little inaccurate.

You might choose to prepare a *log book* that prefigures the amount of time you expect various scenes to take, as well as the time necessary for certain important movements or dialogue. By using a log book during actual filming, you can avoid duplicating what you've already filmed and accurately control your film's continuity.

"The final ecstasy of clay animation is in finding that the rhythm and movement of your film resonates feelings deeply within audiences everywhere."

ADDING THE SOUND TRACK

Once your film is edited you can bring it all to life by adding your sound track. Our *King Tut* sound track consisted of six different tracks: a music track, two dialogue tracks and three sound effects tracks. The dialogue tracks were actually recorded during preproduction so we could use a synchronizer to break each word down into frames for our dialogue log book ("Sync Sound Made Simple," Vol. 8, No. 5/1980).

Authentic sounding indoor and outdoor sound tracks will help create an illusion of background realism. Live recorded sounds, such as actual footsteps, opening doors or flushing toilets, all add to the final effect. Don't hesitate to experiment. Have fun with sound, play with it, try putting it where it's never been before and surprise your audience with the results.

CLAY ARTISTRY

The final ecstasy of clay animation is in finding that the rhythm and movement of your film resonates feelings deeply within audiences everywhere. Although clay films can sometimes depict the craziest of actions—especially the metamorphosis technique—they're also capable of a narrative power that captures the most profound human experiences. □

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Designed for professionals, The Pacific 200/8 XL is the only 200-ft. super 8 with a micro-processor that lets you make one-touch 72-frame lap dissolves of both picture and sound at four filming speeds (1, 18, 24 and 25 fps)—automatically. It has a 2-speed power zoom with an independent motor and an 8-to-1 (7-56mm) 1/1.4 Macro lens that focuses with perfect resolution practically to the front lens element, and the unique Chinon Safety Focusing System with a warning LED in the viewfinder and an "on/off" switch. The shutter is a 135° electromagnetic XL type. There's a built-in intervalometer that allows time-lapse photography from one frame per second to one frame per minute. In addition, the Pacific 200/8 XL

has a fade control with choice of picture, sound, or both. Other special features: flash sync for single-frame exposures • provisions for remote control by cable or radio • BLC control • 36 fps instant slow motion (silent) • built-in self timer.

Pros in the know will also appreciate: automatic TTL exposure with manual override • exposure compensation provision ($\pm 1\text{EV}$) • adjustable diopter eyepiece • double-system sound provision • 3-way sound monitoring system • 3-position

shut trigger release • tripod socket • battery test button • 50-ft. cartridge capability • convenient folding grip • accepts all Chinon accessories, like battery packs and lights.

Full Command Viewfinder monitors camera functions, leaving you free to be a creative film maker. Signals graphically displayed include: aperture scale • meter needle • over (red zone) and under (red LED) exposure warning • split-image rangefinder • film transport indicator • Safety Focusing warning (red LED flicker) • 8 sec. scene timer (orange LED) • recording signal (green LED) • lap dissolve signal (orange LED flicker).

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With the space age upon us, technology is moving faster than ever. It takes a lot less time for things to develop—especially in the world of photography.

Take West Germany, for example. Back in the 13th Century, when somebody decided to build the largest church in Germany, it took

over 630 years to complete. But in 1980, it's only taken 30 short years for Photokina to become the largest photographic fair in the world. Both of these spectacles—Der Kölner Dom cathedral and the biannual Photokina—were recently visible in Cologne, where SUPER-8 FILMAKER sent its investigators in search of what's

new in Super-8. Their reports are both informative and encouraging. However, not all of the items we heard about will become immediately available in the United States.

Thanks to the concept of modular systems and the development of microelectronic devices such as integrated circuit chips and microcomputers, Super-8 equipment is

becoming increasingly sophisticated. Judging from the array of Super-8 machinery displayed at Photokina '80, it's clear that manufacturers are putting their efforts in two directions at once. At the lower end of the price range, many cameras (silent and sound) have been updated to include more of the popular features that people want.



The "Agfa family" includes a Super-8 camera and a monitor.



Eumig S128XL and S125XL. Eumig's PMA wide-angle attachment and a boom mike are standard equipment for their two new cameras, the S128XL and S125XL. Both cameras shoot at single frame, 18 or 24 fps, have 220-degree shutters, macro focusing and fades. The difference in lenses, the S128XL has a f/1.2, 7-56mm lens, the S125XL has an f/1.2, 8-90mm lens. The S128XL also adds 36 fps, an intervalometer and a scene timer. *List prices:* Eumig (USA), 225 Community Dr., Great Neck, NY 11020.

Elmo Transvision 600

Put your own Super-8 films on your television screen with the Elmo Transvision 600, a new film-to-TV player. You thread up your film almost as if you were threading an upright reel-to-reel tape recorder. A flying spot scanner delivers a TV signal through a hook-up with your set's antenna terminals. Freeze frame, rapid rewinding, speeds of 18 or 24 fps and playback of both magnetic and optical sound tracks are all possible. Elmo, 70 New Hyde Park Rd., New Hyde Park, NY 11040.

Sankyo Stereo 800 Telecine

Get clear, flickerless Super-8 video transfers for broadcasting, educational or home use with the Stereo 800 projector. Converts 800-foot reels shot at 18 or 24 fps. Sankyo Seiki, 1275 Valley Brook Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071.



Bauer S709XL Profi-Set

Bauer's 75th anniversary gift is a spectacular filmmaker's "Box of Tricks"—the Profi-Set. First, you get the S709XL Microcomputer camera with an f/1.2, 6-51mm Macro-Neovaron lens and many of the features from their higher class S715XL camera. And that's only the beginning! You also get an all-weather aluminum case containing a bellows compendium with seven masks, glass, tilting plate, black lettering kit and much more. Bauer Div., AIC Photo, 168 Glen Cove Rd., Carle Pl., NY 11514. *List:* \$2,460.

Chicon 609XL

The new Chicon 609XL sound camera provides for quality image and sound with a f/1.2, 7-42mm macro zoom lens, built-in recording amplifier, provision for a cordless mike, mike and monitor inputs and microphone mixing capability. Other features include a full information viewfinder, 18 fps filming speed with both sound and silent cartridges, automatic exposure and one-touch picture/sound lap dissolve. From Chicon U.S.A., 43 Fadem Rd., Springfield, NJ 07081.



ace Age Super-8

And, at the same time, we're seeing further refinements in top-of-the-line equipment for the professional or serious-minded filmmaker.

The modularity of Super-8 cameras is exemplified by the new Bell & Howell MS45 (reviewed in "Product Probe"), the Chiron Modular-8 and the Beaulieu 6008 Pro which offers a crystal sync control

unit. Another new kind of system is the "Agfa family" Super-8 camera and monitor, touted as "the world's first system with which film scenes and stills can be shot and reproduced using one and the same film."

In the film-to-video scene, the writing's on the wall—it works! More and more people were talking about the feasibility of

using Super-8 as a production medium and videotape as the release format. New Super-8 film-to-video systems were introduced by both Sankyo and Elmo. The Sankyo Stereo 800 Telecine projector will convert and transfer your films onto a television set with the help of a video camera. Elmo's Transvision 600 uses a flying spot scanner to directly

transfer your films onto your TV.

Complete lines of cameras and projectors, from simple to elegant, were also displayed by Bauer, Canon, Eumig and other manufacturers—but space prohibits mentioning all of them. Rest assured that new items not shown here will be covered in future issues of SUPER-8 FILM MAKER.—Ed. □

Eumig 8940 Stereo Multiprocessor
Fades, cross-cuts, tricky dissolves, track-to-track transfers—that's only a sampling of the 16 sound recording transitions possible with the Eumig 8940 Stereo Multiprocessor projector. Before recording your sound track, you can even hear a test run of it and watch the panel lights flash accordingly. Other attributes are 18, 24 fps, still frame and frame-by-frame inching. f/1.2, 12.5–25mm lens with a 15 volt, 150 watt halogen lamp. Eumig (USA), 225 Community Dr., Great Neck, NY 11020.



Elmo GS-1200 Xenon Stereo
A major breakthrough for Super-8 projection—it's no understatement to describe the new Elmo GS-1200 Xenon-Stereo projector just that way. Elmo has replaced the 200 watt halogen lamp of its GS-1200 with a 250 watt Xenon-arc lamp. When combined with your choice of either an f/1.12, 12.5–30mm or f/1.2, 25–50mm zoom lens, the projector yields an incredibly sharp image from a distance of more than 40 feet. With two independent amplifiers (30 watts each) for stereo or two-track playback/recording, you can easily fill an auditorium with your sound track. A built-in pulse synchronizer lets you play a separate sound track on a recorder in sync, perfect for showing a film double-system, or with a foreign sound track. List price: \$3,740, lenses \$250 each. Elmo, 70 New Hyde Park Rd., New Hyde Park, NY 11040.



Chiron Modular-8
The latest addition to Chiron's varied assortment of cameras provides yet more multiplicity of choice. The Chiron Modular-8 is a full sound/silent modular system. The basic camera has an f/1.2, 13mm lens which can be interchanged with two other lens modules: f/1.2, 9–27mm and f/1.2, 78–42mm. An enhancement to the lens modules is the power zoom module operating at two speeds. Automatic exposure, backlight control, filming speeds of 1, 18 and 30 fps and a full information viewfinder are all given. The sound recording module comes neatly packaged as a folding grip, including the mike, amp, recording signal and a mixer. Chiron USA, 43 Fadem Rd., Springfield, NJ 07081.

Nizo 6080
The big news from Braun/Nizo is their first 200-foot cartridge camera—the Nizo 6080. It's a real special effects model offering multiple possibilities of abrupt or gradual fades and dissolves and even double exposures. In fact, the basic price includes a bellows hood, matte box and several mattes. The optics look promising with a Schneider Macro-Variozoom f/1.4, 7–80mm lens and the option of a wide-angle attachment. Speeds range from 9 to 44 fps. Braun Canada, 3269 American Dr., Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

Bell & Howell/Mamiya MS45
Bell & Howell's new modular camera system, the MS45, allows the filmmaker to grow with his or her filmmaking equipment. The basic camera gives you an f/1.2, 8.5–34mm zoom lens, 18 fps, automatic exposure and recording level control, manual diopter focusing and a viewfinder LED readout screen. The interchangeable CM4 and CM2 feature modules snap on at the side of the camera to offer variations of more filming speeds, fades, PC/flash contact and more. The AF1 autofocus module clips on under the lens. List prices: MS45 \$429.95, AF1 \$189.95, CM4 \$129.95, CM2 \$89.95. Bell & Howell/Mamiya, One Mamiya Dr., Kensington Ctr. for Business, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056.



Bell & Howell 33ST and 33SR
Weighing in at 14 lbs are Bell & Howell's two new sound projectors—the 33ST and the 33SR—their "lightest and most compact" models yet. The 33SR is single-track while the 33ST is twin-track, recording and playing sound on both the main and balance strips. Shared features include 600-foot reel capacity, 18 and 24 fps in forward or reverse and automatic sound level control. The lens is f/1.3, 15–25mm, with a 12 volt, 100 watt lamp. Bell & Howell/Mamiya, One Mamiya Dr., Kensington Ctr. for Business, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056.



Beaulieu 1028 XL 60
Beaulieu's new 1028 XL 60 camera is easy to operate even with a sophisticated range of features. The lens is an f/1.2, 6.8–44mm macro zoom lens, with the option of two-speed power zoom or manual zooming. Automatic exposure and recording level control can be overridden manually. There's a full range of speeds from single frame to 9, 18, 24 and 36 fps, the capability for 200-foot cartridges and a PC/flash contact to complete the picture of a well-rounded camera. Adams & Assoc., 1645 Bank St., Suite 202, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 7Z1, Canada.



Sankyo Sound 460
The Sankyo Sound 460 projector is a lightweight in terms of dollars and pounds, but doesn't skimp on features. An f/1.4, 15–25mm lens and 8 volt, 50 watt lamp create the basic image. Other attributes include 600-foot reel capacity, 18 or 24 fps, sound-on-sound recording, fades, auto level control and inputs for microphone and aux. List price: \$309. Sankyo Seiki, 1275 Valley Brook Ave., Lyndhurst, NJ 07071.

State-of-the-art Super-8 video transfers via the Rank Cintel Flying Spot Telecine



Photos: Peter Abramowitz

A remote control unit (foreground) operates the Rank Cintel Flying Spot Telecine (background) which is kept behind glass doors in a dust-free environment. The monitor on the right displays your Super-8 as it's transferred to video.

You sit in a darkened room watching a console with rows of illuminated readouts, controls and joysticks. Above you, a color monitor displays picture with a quality more beautiful than you've ever seen on a television screen. Then it hits you—the image originates on Super-8 film!

This was our experience when SUPER-8 FILMMAKER recently watched a Rank Cintel Flying Spot Scanner Telecine in action at Versatile Video of Sunnyvale, California. Filmmaker Ralph Ackerman invited us to observe the transfer of original Super-8 footage to 3/4-inch video for his feature entitled *Rock-It Box*, which he hopes to market in the home videocassette arena (see "Headliners").

Renting the Rank Telecine doesn't come cheap at a price of nearly \$200 an hour and up, but you get your money's worth with the ultimate in quality and flexibility. This telecine's capability lays to rest the myth that Super-8 doesn't have the necessary quality for commercial television broadcast, and strengthens Super-8's claim to be more suitable for location recording than extremely expensive and fragile video equipment.

Identified Flying Object

A "flying spot scanner" may sound like a filmmaker with a mi-

graine, but the concept of scanning a transparent image, line by line, to form a video image has been around since the early days of television. Scanning basically involves illuminating a transparency (frame of film) with the raster (moving point of light) of a cathode ray tube. The tube's light is focused onto the transparency, then a photoelectric device, such as a photomultiplier tube, picks up the resultant light and turns it into an electric current—the basis for the video signal.

The scan lines of a television picture do not all exist at the same time but are traced, one by one, from the top of the picture to the bottom. They are "drawn" by a moving electron beam: the flying spot. Through persistence of vision, our eyes see this as a continuous series of lines.

Since the photomultiplier tube is looking at film being scanned with a moving point of light, it never really sees the full frame of film at any given point in time. All the tube sees is a spot which varies in intensity depending on where it's located behind the transparency. The principle is so simple that the device needs almost no optics to produce a distortionless picture. For the pickup tube, the image only exists in time. (In the same way, we can only perceive a piece of

music in time—it never "exists" all at once.)

Ranking the Rank

So what's new about scanning with the Rank Cintel Flying Spot Telecine? Plenty. First, it has a flexible transport which accepts 16, 35 and Super-8mm film with only a quick change of the gate where the film is actually scanned.

Second, the film transport resembles a large, sprocket-free, tape recorder. A rubber-faced capstan transports the film without any intermittent movement, making it virtually impossible to damage your film. The one sprocket wheel in the film path is free-wheeling, to provide electrical information on film speed and frame location for the telecine's scanning system.

Third, there's *Digitiscan*—a most elegant application of the computer to video. Housed within the Rank Telecine, the Digitiscan device stores, processes and regurgitates each frame sequentially, which allows for some rather miraculous possibilities. Your Super-8 film can be stopped, run fast forward or fast reverse without harming the film or even losing a readable picture on the monitor. This capability allows you to cue to any frame you choose, thus saving a lot of time.

Color Correction

How would you like to correct colors in shadow areas, mid-tones and highlights simultaneously and in different directions while transferring your film to video? How about decreasing the contrast in that "against the window" shot or modifying the flesh tones of your actors? No problem with the Rank Cintel *Colorgrade* unit, a feature that provides the means to correct film processing or exposure errors and color balance the picture.

If your budget allows, there's also T.O.P.S.Y. (Telecine Operation Programming System), a multiple event programmer that offers a myriad of options, such as scene-by-scene color correction, density correction and even

color changes during dissolves. The cleverness of every element of this system and its completely comprehensive design make for television images unlike any you've seen before—especially from Super-8 film.

An Admirable Marriage
Shooting in Super-8 film and editing in video offers the best of both worlds rather than a compromise of the two. By using film, you can spend less to shoot steady and sharp images which are obtainable in lighting situations well near impossible to shoot with color video cameras. Like Ackerman, you could then go ahead and edit your film in video with the advantages of speed, accuracy of assembly and instantly available special effects.



Finally, remember that your 1- or 2-inch master tape will meet professional broadcast standards, forever disguising its Super-8 origins (if that's what you want). This is not pie-in-the-sky speculation but a reality that filmmakers like Ralph Ackerman are discovering for themselves.

As cable broadcasting stations and home video units continue to proliferate, the demand for low budget and special interest programs will also increase, making this media interface a most attractive marriage. □

Peter Abramowitz, SUPER-8 FILMMAKER's video consultant, produces educational and training films in Super-8, 16mm and video.

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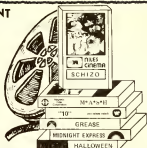
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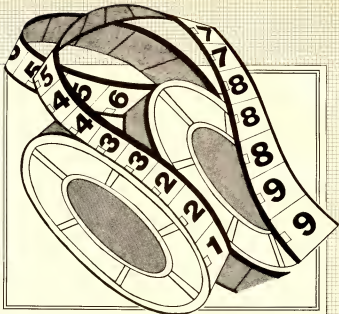


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CIRCLE INFOCARD 54



TAKE ME TO YOUR...

For the first time ever, Super-8 has its own leader—the **SUPER8 SOUND PICTURE LEADER!** No more reduction prints of 16 and 35mm standardized leaders, which were never quite useful enough. Now Super-8 filmmaker Gunther Hoos, in collaboration with Arnold Schieman of the Canadian National Film Board, has designed—specifically for Super-8—a leader which introduces standardization to color correction, density correction (timing), video transfer from Super-8 and sound synchronization. Color, density and alignment have all been matched to conform to laboratory standards. The end result is an easy passage for your film through all steps of duplication, with better technical quality. From Super8 Sound, 95 Harvey St., Cambridge, MA 02140. *List price:* \$30 for a roll of 24 complete leaders. \$5 for sample of 5.

CIRCLE INFOCARD 46

GET CHARGED UP



"I get a kick out of you-oo-oo . . ." If only your batteries could sing, they'd certainly serenade the new **GENERAL ELECTRIC DOUBLE CHARGER.**

This low-cost battery charger takes up to eight AA size, four C and/or D size, two 9 volt size batteries or a combination of any of the above. The batteries are ready to use in only 3 to 5 hours (fully charged in 8 to 12 hours). From General Electric Co. Battery Business Dept., P.O. Box 861, Gainesville, FL 32602. *Suggested retail price:* \$5.98.

CIRCLE INFOCARD 47



YOU AINT HEARD NOTHIN' YET!

Babies belching, elephants charging, mysterious heartbeats, boiling Venusian lakes—what do all of the above have in common? They're all part of the **BBC SOUND EFFECTS LIBRARY**, a 35-record set with a 132-page handbook containing a complete cross-index and how-to articles by professionals. The categories cover the gamut of natural

and unnatural noises. Locked grooves make for easy access and transfer with no risk of getting more than you want. You can either purchase the whole set or a minimum of four. From Films for the Humanities, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08540. *List prices:* \$390 (set); \$12.95 (each). **CIRCLE INFOCARD 48**

PUT TITLE HERE



Bold and bright titles may be just the final touch your cinematic masterpiece needs to set it off. **KAISER LETTERING KITS** come with 170 plastic letters, numbers and symbols in either white,

yellow or red. Choose from the self-adhesive or the magnetic form, supplied with two metal plates of different colors, black/white or red/yellow. Unless they arrive late, your audience won't miss the credits when you use these 3/8-inch high letters in Helvetica Bold typeface. From Osawa (USA), 21 Harbor Park Dr., Port Washington, NY 11050. *List prices:* \$14.50 (adhesive); \$34.50 (magnetic).

CIRCLE INFOCARD 49

HOW DRY I AM

Dry as a bone—that's the ideal state for your camera equipment and **MULTIFORM DRI-CAN** will keep it that way. This new product is a small, lightweight perforated aluminum can packed with long-lasting indicating silica gel. When the desiccant content has absorbed all the moisture it can hold, it turns pink. Just place the can in a vented oven at 300 degrees F for about three hours until the desiccant color returns to a deep blue. As well as protecting your equipment from deterioration, rust, corrosion, mold, mildew and other damage from moisture or high humidity, Dri-Can will also keep your potato



chips crackling crisp on location. From Multiform Desiccant Products, 1418 Niagara St., Buffalo, NY 14213. *List price:* \$2.55.

CIRCLE INFOCARD 51

YOU LIGHT UP MY FILM

You may not be able to turn straw into gold yet, but it's easy to turn a window frame into a camera or light support. The **BOGEN MINI-AUTOPOLE** is a handy device that extends from 39 to 67 inches and can be placed in the frame of a doorway, window, archway or similar confined areas to hold a light or camera. The cam-action positive locking system ensures secure positioning. Available in sets of two, the Mini-Autopole presents a nifty solution to shooting in or out of the closet. From Bogen Photo



Corp., 100 So. Van Brunt St., P.O. Box 448, Englewood, NJ 07631. *List price:* \$99.95.

CIRCLE INFOCARD 50

ROCK STEADY

The next time you're filming a rock concert or just feel the script is shaky, try the **ADCO BODYPOD**—a portable camera platform. It provides a steady anchor for any tripod mountable movie camera. For those incredibly high leaps of the guitarist, the camera base portion pivots up vertically. The whole Body Pod only weighs 13 ounces and is constructed of tough polycarbonate. From ADCO Distributing, 1055 E. Wayzata Blvd., #211, Wayzata, MN 55391. *List price:* \$59.95.



CIRCLE INFOCARD 52

LENNY LIPTON

The Pope of Super-8:

Lipton's Latin America Journal

When a jet-lagged Abrao Berman came to my studio earlier this year with an offer to attend his Super-8 Festival in Sao Paulo, Brazil, I said "Of course!" Privately, however, I thought, "I'll believe it when it happens."

However, Abrao is an energetic ball of fire when he's not dazed by travel fatigue. To my surprise, the next news I received was from the United States International Communications Agency (a division of the Foreign Service) asking me if I'd be willing to put on shows in selected Brazilian cities for a week prior to the Festival. Airfare and expenses paid. I agreed.

The whole thing was perfect. Not only would I see new cities, show films and attend Abrao's festival, I would also be able to make the

hop back to Caracas, Venezuela, just in time for Julio Neri's Super-8 Festival and to attend the International Federation of Super-8 meeting there.

Knowing it was going to be an exhaustingly full schedule, and that I would no doubt be having a good deal of fun with old and new friends, I was still unprepared for the reception I received in Sao Paulo: TV and newspaper inter-

views plus a new title, the "Pope of Super-8!"

In the following journal I've tried to capture some of this excitement and some of the pace. The journal is unlike anything I have ever done before for SUPER-8 FILMAKER, but I hope you enjoy it, as, armed with my little Minox 35 EL, I come face-to-face with the fascinating people in the Latin American (and international) independent filmmaking scene.

BUZZING IN BRAZIL

August 5th—Hilton, Sao Paulo. After lunch, Abrao Berman drove me to Festival Cinema in his MG replica . . . fun. Went to the opening party for the Bar Super-8 . . . first Super-8 bar . . . maybe first bar devoted to *any* film format. Talked to drunk newspaper critics who have dubbed me the "Pope of Super-8!"



Super-8 means freedom to these people, freedom to work out ideas in a low-cost medium. Got invited here and there. Interviewed as "Pope of Super-8" by Globe TV, Channel 5 . . . biggest station in Brazil . . . good image. Then went to screening.

Festival theater one of the worst designs ever . . . best seats taken away by stairs. . . Saw a wide mixture of films. Projection sub-

standard, image too dim and out of focus . . . am amazed by what people will put up with. Image kept going out of focus, either stripe defect holding film away from gate or aperture, or optical defect in projectors.

The films: TV collage (titled *Canal Zero*, *Channel Zero* in English) races by, popular with crowd, obvious and tedious



track, reminds me of *Cor-nucopia*, a 16mm film I made in 1968. Next film about love affair between young girl and man who is about to blow his brain out. Lousy film but technically interesting with use of extensive dissolves in camera. Technique, though, is easiest point of filmmaking . . . heart is what counts. Good film about an old guitar maker: poor technique, but lots of feeling.

August 6th.

More films. Projection somewhat improved . . . faster lenses, new screen . . . but still dim. No sense of community here as there is in Caracas. Once the films are

over, there's no place to go and talk. Festival cinema on horribly busy thoroughfare. Films were an eclectic mixture. Weird animation where cartoon character comes to life and changes places with animator, then pounds him into the page. Film about the *Congaceiros*, the bandits of Brazil. Beautiful photography but I didn't feel the poetry I was supposed to.

Similar themes are emerging all over the world in Super-8. There's a yearning to express oneself in film. In developing countries like Brazil, people are seeking to show national cultural heritage and also make state-

ments about poverty. For example, an ecological film about destruction of Rio de Janeiro through the building of high-rises, as well as films about guitar builders and *Congaceiros*. Surrealist and experimental films also spring up. Super-8 is the most accessible means of filmic expression these people have.

It's interesting to see all the excitement caused by the Festival. The theater is packed every night and there are features on TV news and in the papers. I've been interviewed by both TV and press. This level of interest in Super-8 doesn't exist in the U.S., probably because 16mm got there first. But here and elsewhere Super-8 is the independent film movement.

We have a worldwide political-social-artistic movement based on Super-8. It doesn't seem to have been noticed but it can no longer be ignored. Super-8 is the film medium of developing nations. Abrao Berman in Sao Paulo, Julio and Mercedes Neri in Caracas have all done a fantastic job promoting their festivals

August 8th—5:47 p.m.

Yesterday saw *best* film . . . what does *best* mean? Only film to make me sit up and take notice: *Gratia Pleni* by Carlos Porto de Andrade, Jr. and Leonardo Crescenti Neto. Bizarre story about a nun . . . gorgeous cinematography. The nun wanders through what I presume to be a nunnery, has a kind of spiritual contact with a beetle, turns it upside

The Pope of Super-8

down. Beautiful color effects achieved by shooting outdated Ektachrome, processed by the worst lab in town . . . sort of solarization with glowing reds, especially in the fades. Only film I feel good about, but one is worth it.

Met Thomas Farkas, director of Fotoptica (chain of photo shops and major photo finisher and processor of Super-8 films) . . . very cultured man. Fotoptica co-sponsors the Sao Paulo Festival. Put in a word about a better projector for next year but he tells me import restrictions are severe. Maybe Braziliens can stand bad projection because their 35mm cinemas are allegedly so horrible . . . but they have been calling out for "Luz! Luz!" and "Foco!"

August 11th—2:12 p.m.

My screening went well but only 30 or 40 people came to see the "Pope of Super-8." Showed a mixture of Super-8 and 16mm. Questions were intelligent, people liked the films and thanked me for coming there. Filmmakers very curious about American independent movement.

After I changed into tie and jacket, we went to awards ceremony . . . a wonder unto itself. Theater holds about 800 people; hundreds outside still wanting to get in. People in every available aisle space . . . feeling of possible panic. Abrao looks calm but later tells me he was worried. He joked with the crowd inside but people outside screaming to get in. The event is being covered by TV film and video cameras and people with Super-8 equipment.

Many awards are presented. Lots of people up on stage. The crowd tremendously responsive. Abrao very poised and informal with them. Character of this event to-

tally unlike one in U.S. Informal, enthusiastic and fun. I'm called up on stage to present the grand award. There are two sets of prizes: the official jury and popular jury. I don't know exactly what one I'm giving, but I hand a little Super-8 statue, in form of an "eight," to men who made *Gratia Plena*.

"We have a world-wide political-social-artistic movement based on Super-8. It doesn't seem to have been noticed but it can no longer be ignored."

I made a short speech. "This is one time the speech is going to be shorter than the intro, blah blah blah . . ." I console losers. Then onto Gallery Fotoptica (say Photochka).

Saw an Abrao Berman film about actors in Brazil. Very good. A quality of warmth and absurdity came through. I liked it very much . . . wish I had told him . . . but I was so sleepy.

I need to rest my tired eyes . . . need sleep . . . writing in the cabin of Avianca flight from Bogota to Caracas . . . waiting to take off.

VENTURING INTO VENEZUELA

August 13th—11:00 a.m.—Caracas.

The Happy Tours picked me up at airport, whisked me through immigrations and customs . . . then into a taxi bound for Anauco Hilton where I was supposed to meet Mercedes and Julio. Wound up visiting Room 1212 where a party developed. Many people there from all over the world.

This is truly an international festival . . . people from Canada, France, Belgium, US, Brazil, Mexico, Curacao.

Slept lots next day. Then tedious cocktail party at big house in the hills. People speaking Spanish, French and English. Disco dancing in one room. Julio nervous until critical mass of people reached. (A party isn't under way until it's impossible to walk through the room.) Talked to many people . . . especially enjoyed French film critics Marcel Gröes and Robert Malengreau, organizers of the International Federation of Super-8.

August 15th—10:07 a.m.

Meeting of International Federation in Room 1212. Now discussing the constitution of the federation, voting, legal procedures. The Federation is being reorganized to have international legal status and to promote Super-8 all over the world and distribute films to various festivals.

August 15th—5:30 p.m.

Trying to go back to films I've seen . . . political films shown on afternoon of the 14th. Left me cold. *Los Años Duros*, 90-minute feature by Gabriel Retes, seemed labored although I stayed for the whole thing. About violence in Mexico City and need for revolution. Good acting and skillful cutting but I couldn't care . . . my head just isn't there. The revolutionaries are as nuts as the government.

I haven't written about *Bolívar, Sinfonia Tropical*, a 74-minute Venezuelan film by Diego Risquez. You'd have to be Venezuelan to know what it's about. Beautiful photography, operatic, costume pageant, fantastic scenery and music. They may blow it up to 35mm for distribution here.

August 16th—10:05 a.m.

Sitting in third meeting of International Federation in Room 1212 (Club Douze Douze). Going over agenda . . . should there be an address list of filmmakers . . . international distribution of films. Many parties . . . one each night.

Tired of parties. I'm in the paper again today . . . they're quoting things I said here two years ago.

August 18th—10:13 p.m.—Pan Am flight from Caracas to Miami. After 13 days, one day of films has blurred into another . . . not

“Super-8 means freedom to these people, freedom to work out ideas in a low-cost medium.”

quite. The two outstanding films I've seen . . . those that gripped my eyes . . . were the Brazilian *Gratia Plena* and a film by Rene Metch of Curacao. I cannot find it in my program notes, but believe the title was *Sorpesa*. It's a very gripping film about a ritual. Weird black lady being initiated into the rites of a cult or a goddess . . . very haunting.

The critics were most amazing. They gave one of their three prizes to *Bambule* by Marco Mudugno . . . a sloppy 90 minutes of Super-8 blown up to 16mm. Technically superior. Takes snatches of Rossellini, Antonioni, Fellini. Totally derivative.

Carlos Castillo won for his three short films . . . amazing . . . they are so lightweight. A Mexican feature, *Los Años Duros*, by Gabriel Retes and Bolivar, *Sinfonia Tropical* by Diego Riquez split a prize. Each prize is worth about \$750. I think. The jurors do it again! How to complain? I don't accept the jury, or their prizes, or the concept of a jury. I know they can serve to bring certain interesting works to the public attention, but in this case what are they spotlighting? The only film they selected that makes any sense to me is *Bolivar*.

So the trip is over . . . the festival is over . . . goodbye to old and new friends. A good festival for the participants is like a summer camp. All my problems at home have faded. All I think about is where we're going to meet next,

in whose room, where to eat dinner, dare I skip a screening (in two weeks I skipped one).

August 19th—flight from Miami to San Francisco. Comparing festivals: the Sao Paulo Festival is national; the Caracas Festival is international. Caracas films were better, as one might expect, but lots of talent in and around Sao Paulo. Conditions more difficult in Brazil, with import restrictions. Neither country has 200-foot cartridge. There's a possibility of Super-8 distribution using videocassettes, but standards differ from country to country. Projection at Caracas much better, but there were still many disasters. Super-8 needs a high gain screen. Screens in both cases matte. Acoustics in both halls grim. Tremendously enthusiastic audience in both cities. The future of the independent cinema is Super-8.

EPILOGUE—A MONTH LATER

The enthusiasm of the people in Sao Paulo and Caracas has stayed with me. I'm not just talking about the filmmakers! The audiences! There are large and devoted audiences for Super-8 films in both these cities. We simply don't have anything like this in the United States. I wonder why . . .

The emergence of the independent cinema in other countries is synonymous with Super-8. Here we use both 16mm and Super-8. But the future of independent cinema lies with Super-8. It's more accessible, more intimate, lower in cost and delivers the goods in terms of quality. Where Super-8 falls down is in the area of distribution. The 16mm infrastructure prevails, as the institutions and organizations most likely to be interested in the Super-8 independent film don't usually book Super-8 films. Hopefully, the situation will change.

Until it does, the best bet for Super-8 dissemination in the U.S. might be a touring festival. I find it bizarre that Super-8, in terms of festivals, is so much more vital in other countries. □

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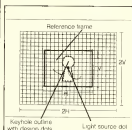


Figure 1: The design for a keyhole filter.

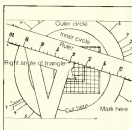


Figure 2: How to mark positions for the nylon threads which create the filter.

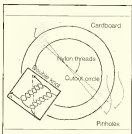


Figure 3: One piece of thread is used for two sets of pinholes. Inset shows double square knot.

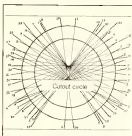


Figure 4: This is how your completed keyhole filter will look threaded up.

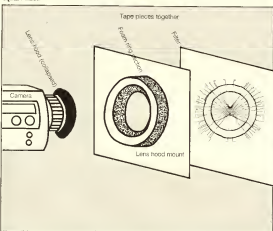


Figure 5: Taped together, the filter and lens hood mount should easily fit onto the camera.

Star screen filters are a neat way of adding "sparkle" to your scenes, but unfortunately they're also costly. With the easy method presented here, however, you can design and create inexpensive filters that will bend light from a single point source of light (a candle, spotlight, street light or specular reflection) into almost any imaginable shape—circles, squares, ovals, parabolas, spirals, cloverleaves and diamonds.

Commercial star screen filters are usually made of glass with equally spaced grid lines engraved at right angles to each other. These engraved lines refract the light in specific patterns. With my method you use nylon thread stretched across a cardboard frame, but in the same pattern as for a glass filter. Then you'll build a mount to attach this filter frame onto your camera, using cardboard and foam rubber. The pattern for a star screen filter can be easily found in any basic movie or photography book. The example I use here is a keyhole filter effect. The materials used are available at art supply and fabric stores. See the Materials Box for details.

MATERIALS BOX

- Nylon thread (invisible thread)
- Graph paper
- Right-angle triangle
- Draftsman's compass
- 12-by-12-inch corrugated cardboard
- 12-inch ruler
- Pin
- Needle
- Scissors
- Masking Tape
- X-acto knife
- Foam rubber
- Camera with TTL viewing and lens hood
- Tripod

Drawing the Filter Frame

The first step is to determine the measurements for the filter frame. Mount your camera on a tripod and set the lens at infinity and full telephoto. (A camera with through-the-lens viewing works best.) Measure the diagonal of the rectangular area seen through the viewfinder by holding a ruler as close as you

can in front of the lens without touching it. To measure the distance, fold an index card over the ruler and position it diagonally so its edge is just visible at the upper left corner. Place another index card on the ruler with its edge just visible at the lower right corner, and then record the distance between the two cards. Call this distance D.

Use D to calculate the horizontal (H) and vertical (V) dimensions of the reference frame (the area

"You can design and create inexpensive filters that will bend light into almost any imaginable shape—circles, squares, ovals, parabolas, spirals, cloverleaves and diamonds."

seen through the viewfinder of your camera) for the filter. The formulas are: $H = 4D/5$ and $V = 3D/5$. On graph paper, draw the reference frame with the dimensions of H and V. Draw a second frame around the first one with the dimensions 2H by 2V. You now have a drawing of the filter frame.

Drawing the Design

Figure 1 shows the two frames and the keyhole design (drawn inside the reference frame). Mark one dot in color pencil to indicate where you intend the light source to be within the keyhole. Mark design dots at regular intervals on the keyhole outline with a different color from the light source dot. These design dots indicate how the rays of light will fall.

Making the Filter Frame

Cut out the larger frame on the graph paper and tape it in the center of a one-foot square piece of cardboard. Using a draftsman's compass, draw a circle on the cardboard with the compass point in the center of the reference frame and the circumference falling just outside the corners of the piece of graph paper. This circle will be cut out later on in the process. Draw a second circle about an inch beyond the first one. The nylon thread will be at-

tached to the cardboard just outside this circle.

Threading the Filter

Figure 2 shows the reference frame inside the circles and how to mark the positions of the filter threads. Line up the light source dot and a design dot along the right-angle of the triangle. Place the ruler on the bottom of the triangle as shown and make two marks on the cardboard just outside the outer circle, numbering each pair for reference. Make two marks for every design dot.

After you've made each set of marks, cut out the inner circle you drew on the cardboard. Punch pinholes through each numbered mark, as shown in Figure 3. Use enough nylon thread to stretch between two sets of pinholes and knot the two ends together with a double knot. Continue until all of the pinholes have been threaded, keeping the knots on the same side of the cardboard.

The Camera Mount

Your keyhole filter is complete (Figure 4). Although it doesn't look much like your original design, it will produce the right effect. To put the filter on your camera, you'll have to make a cardboard hood mount (Figure 5). First, cut out a ring-shaped section of foam that fits snugly around the collapsed lens hood of your camera. Next, cut a circle in the cardboard about 1/2-inch less radius than that of the hole in the foam ring, so the lens hood won't exert any pressure on the filter's nylon threads. Tape the filter to the front of the hood mount. With this arrangement you can also rotate the filter, which should fit easily over the collapsed lens hood.

To get the best results when filming with your filters, experiment with the focal length. I got the best effects when I used a longer focal length, a dark background and a single, prominent light source. Now that you have the basic method, you can try as many different designs as you can think of.—Mark Clardy, Houston, TX



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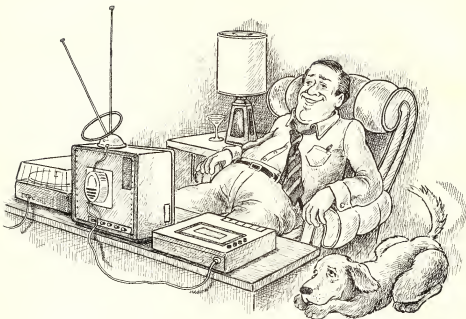
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SNEAK PREVIEW!

REVIEWS AND LISTINGS OF SUPER-8 AND VIDEO RELEASES FOR HOME VIEWING

WILLIAM WIND REVIEWS: SPECIAL EFFECTS FILMS

Name your own favorite special effects sequence. . . Is it seeing the Millennium Falcon crew dogging asteroids in outer space (*The Empire Strikes Back*)? Watching a luxury liner turning upside down in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean (*The Poseidon Adventure*)? Witnessing a re-creation of the actual air attack on Pearl Harbor

(*Tora! Tora! Tora!*) or the fictitious attack on New York City by Meridian Invaders (*War of the Worlds*)? Or is it viewing nothing less than the apocalyptic destruction of Los Angeles by natural forces (*Earthquake*) or man-made mayhem (*1941*)?

The films I've just mentioned are only half a dozen of the many special effects films that you can collect in Super-8 and video. If you have a Super-8 film editor, you can study and savor a frame-by-frame analysis of these special effects techniques. Here are a few of my own favorites.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Let's begin with the space epic that packed them in all summer long—*The Empire Strikes Back*, the highly imag-

inative sequel to *Star Wars*. If you read our interview with *Empire's* director Irvin Kershner ("Year of the Yoda," Vol. 8, No. 5/1980), you know that the special effects in this film were designed to serve the story, not overshadow it. For that reason, the effects tend to go by very quickly, with very little time to study them. . . a good ploy to get you to go back and see the film again.

While I'm sure 20th Century-Fox and George Lucas would like you to do just that, you can also purchase a superb Super-8 digest that combines special effects from the first half of the feature into a fast-paced 17 minutes. Along with the familiar assortment of Rebel and Empire spaceships, this Ken Films' digest includes the taun-teuns (marvelous animated creatures that carry the heroes around the frozen planet of Hoth), the Imperial Walkers (lumbering, giant elephant-like machines that attack the Rebel base on Hoth), the asteroid belt (into which Han Solo plunges the Millennium Falcon to escape Darth Vader's forces), and, most complex of all, Yoda (Frank Oz's muppet creation).

With a Super-8 editor, you can see how skilfully the live-action and SFX footage flow together. The sharp image and color in the *Empire* digest is close to the best I've seen in Super-8. The complex sound, including John Williams' music is recreated with every subtlety intact. Even if you're not a "space buff," this digest is a feast for the eyes and a boost for the imagination.

THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE

One of the first popular "disaster films" was *The Poseidon Adventure*, which won an Academy Award for its special

Artillery officers of the Rebel Army face Imperial Walkers, the Trojan Horsemen of Darth Vader's vengeance.

©Lucasfilm Ltd. (LFL) 1980



20th Century-Fox

A hot scene from the film *(The Towering Inferno)* that made the outside elevators of San Francisco's St. Francis Hotel world famous.

effects. The primary effects in this film were a giant tidal wave and an ocean liner that turned completely upside down in the water. Some of these effects were created by using model ships and real ocean waves. By shooting these scenes in slow motion, the filmmakers create a sense of great size. However, the most impressive effect was a huge indoor set which ac-

tually revolved 180 degrees during the filming.

Ken Films' digest of *The Poseidon Adventure* concentrates almost entirely on these effects and offers an excellent look at the revolving set in action. You can see quite clearly that many brief shots were intercut to give the effect of a continuous revolution. Color and sound are very good, and

the digest runs about 15 minutes. The special effects in *Poseidon* were created by A. D. Flowers and L. B. Abbott, two of Hollywood's greatest effects creators.

TORA! TORA! TORA!

Two years earlier, Flowers and Abbott won another pair of Oscars for their work on one of the most elaborate special effects films ever made, *Tora! Tora! Tora!* Faced with the seemingly impossible task of recreating the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the results of their efforts can be studied in the Ken Films digest which devotes almost all of its 15-minute running time to the attack scenes. Working with full-scale mock-ups of planes and sections of battleships, as well as meticulously crafted model ships, these special effects geniuses created mass destruction on a scale never before seen in a Hollywood film. At one point, they even recreated a Kamikaze attack by blowing up a real airplane hanger!

The ship models were built on a scale of 3/4-inch to one foot, and they averaged about 35-feet in length. The large scale provided an excellent depth of field, and allowed the filmmakers to ring very realistic explosions. Both factors contributed greatly to the believability of the effects. In fact, the only reason you know that you are looking at miniatures is because they couldn't blow up real battleships. Picture, sound and editing are all very good in this digest, and I would recommend it to any special effects fan.

EARTHQUAKE

The 1974 Oscar for special effects went to the king of matte painters, Albert Whitlock, for his outstanding work on *Earthquake*. Whitlock and his team skillfully blend artwork and live photography to create a landscape of destruction and desolation that may never be equalled. For example, an 80-foot replica of the Hollywood Dam is destroyed with 53,000 gallons of water! The enormous scale of the model dam created a very believable flood, which swept away dozens of miniature houses downstream from the dam.

Another type of special effects called for Genevieve Bujold to rescue her son

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Master matte-artist Al Whitlock looking devilishly dapper next to an Airport blue-screen set up.

from among a bunch of sizzling electrical cables. Once again, the SFX team met the challenge and the scene is truly electrifying. The "set piece" of the film, of course, is the earthquake itself, with crumbling buildings and freeways (miniatures), falling concrete and metal (Styrofoam) and highly realistic swaying movements (provided by specially designed camera mounts).

"You can't pick a better effects film to study than *Earthquake*."

All of these fabulous effects are included in Universal 8's digest of **Earthquake**, along with large segments of the soap opera plot. Picture and sound are fair-to-good, and the digest editing is excellent. If you want to create your own disaster epic, you couldn't pick a better film to study than **Earthquake**. (You may also want to read "Special Effects Magic with Al Whitlock," Vol. 5, No. 3/1977.)

QUICKIE REVIEWS

Force 10 From Navarone was actor Robert Shaw's last film. It is a sequel to **The Guns of Navarone** (also available in Super-8) and continues that film's tradition of action and adventure. Shaw and his men are on a mission to blow up a bridge. Arriving at the bridge after a few mishaps, they find it is too sturdy for the explosives they have. Instead of the bridge they blow up a dam, sending a wall of water into the bridge and washing it away.

The digest is devoted mostly to the spectacular finale which uses a lot of excellent special effects. The print is rather dark and contrasty, and unfortu-

nately this works against the many night scenes in the film. However, the sound is excellent and the editor moves the story rapidly to its impressive conclusion.

The Seven-Ups stars Roy Scheider and Tony LoBianco, and was made as an unofficial follow-up to **The French Connection**. The story concerns a pair of undercover cops hot on the trail of a gang that kidnaps gangsters and holds them for ransom. Their efforts take them into the seedier sections of New York City, where one of them gets into a car chase every bit as exciting as the one in **French Connection**.

MORE TO COME

Since most Super-8 distributors now recognize that special effects films are very popular among collectors, there's a continuing array of new releases. Some of the latest titles include George Pal's **When Worlds Collide** and **War of the Worlds**, **Westworld**, **Ice Station Zebra**, **1941**, **The Ten Commandments**, **The Muppet Movie**, **The Hindenburg**, **The Towering Inferno** and the second digest from **Star Wars**.

In addition, you might want to check out some of my earlier reviews of SFX titles such as **Buck Rogers**, **Silent Running**, **Superman**, **Battlestar Galactica**, **Barbarella**, **Alien**, **Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea** and **The Black Hole**. If you enjoy special effects, these digests are a must for every film library.

The films described in this article can be purchased from one or more of the dealers and distributors who advertise in these pages. All of the films previewed in this column were provided by **Movies Unlimited**. □

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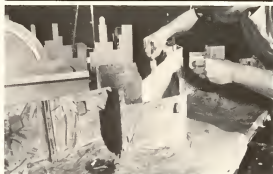
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CIRCLE INFOCARD 21

How to shoot an explosive battle scene with realistic cardboard miniatures



Paint is added to a partially bombed-out building in the foreground of a miniature Middle Eastern city, built from two-dimensional flats. The black hole in the lower left is a "bomb crater."

Associated Images

The city is under attack—bombs burst, fires break out, the night sky fills with smoke. It's an exciting and impressive scene, especially when it's in *your* movie. Best of all, the entire miniature battle, including the explosive effects, cost less to stage than a few rolls of film. The trick is to create the *illusion* of a city under attack in the simplest way possible.

Planning a Battle Scene

The first step in creating our illusion of a city under attack is to stage the scene *at night*—an important element in making the action believable when filmed. The second step is to determine what you want your city to look like.

Third, instead of planning a complete three-dimensional city, simply construct a series of two-dimensional flats. This saves considerable time and, if done carefully, will look solid and three-dimensional on film. (The one drawback to this approach is a limited selection of camera angles.) Then, determine how large your set should be. It's easier and faster to build a fairly large miniature set and, more importantly, it's easier to stage the explosion effects. In addition, it's very difficult to achieve the needed

depth of field on a small scale model.

Putting Things in Perspective

In order to make the set look deeper than it really is, design your miniature set using *forced perspective*. Make the buildings at the back of the set to a much smaller scale than those in the front. This creates the illusion of

"First rule of Miniature City Building: *Don't build nothin' you can't see.*"

depth while making it possible to keep all of the set in focus. Buildings and other elements in the foreground should be highly detailed, while buildings in the background show little or no detail.

Now, choose your technique.

There's a variety of construction techniques available to the miniature set builder, but my favorite technique allows you to work fast and the materials—cardboard, masking tape and paper towels—are cheap and easy to find. Begin by building up the foreground terrain (if your scene calls for it). Cut cardboard to establish the contour of the ground and act as ribs to shape the landscape. Connect the ribs with strips of tagboard and liberal sections of

masking tape. When the general shape of the land is to your liking, cover it with pieces of paper towel which have been dipped in a flour and water paste or thinned white glue, wheat paste, etc. (see "Build Your Own Miniature Sets," Vol. 3, No. 3/1978).

The Middle Eastern miniature city seen in the photography was surrounded by a wall, so the foreground landscape was brought up to the wall. Since no "ground" was visible behind the wall, none was built. First Rule of Miniature City Building: *Don't build nothin' you can't see.*

Lighting the Set

Since this is a night battle scene, all the lighting will come from exploding bombs and fires. This is contrasty lighting that will emphasize relief. Cut buildings out of cardboard and bend appropriately to suggest corners and roofs. Cut out windows and door openings; these openings can be lit to advantage with miniature explosions.

As you work toward the back of the set, make the buildings smaller in scale and use less detail; these buildings will be little more than simple silhouettes.

Fasten everything down securely with tape, staples and nails, then give it all a coat of paint. The explosions will be mostly red and yellow-red (very monochromatic light) so it won't matter too much what colors you paint. Artists' acrylic paints take nicely on the paper towel surfaces.

Destroying Your Work

When the miniature's finished, it's time to light it and rig the explosives. To achieve a night lighting effect, set your camera's filter to tungsten (or indoor) but light your set with a daylight blue (5500 K) photo lamp. This combination will cause the film to record images in blueish tones. Place the lights to the side or back of the set to create a deep, shadowy look. Next, take very careful light readings and underexpose the shot about one stop. (NOTE: Always shoot a few feet of test footage to determine the exposure.)

Two techniques can be used to create miniature explosive effects. For distant explosions, small high-intensity desk lights with red gels can be built right into the set to create a soft pool of light.

Another approach is to light from outside the set with directional spotlights gelled red. When these lights are brought on quickly, then faded out, they'll look convincing. The same basic technique can also create a fire effect.

Another explosive effect, more suitable for foreground explosions, makes use of *flash paper* ("Special Effects," Vol. 8, No. 2/1980). Flash paper is available

"To make the set look deeper than it really is, design your miniature set using forced perspective."

from magicians' supply shops and a couple of dollars' worth should be plenty for a good battle. The flash paper can be detonated with a 6 volt dry cell battery and Solar Igniters (or similar model rocket ignitor). By wiring several charges and running the wires to the same battery, you can fire the explosions in succession during a continuous take.

CAUTION: Any charge which is not in direct camera view should be placed in a non-flammable container such as a metal jar lid or dish. Don't have any burnable material placed over the flash paper charge. Explosions located in the foreground must also be in suitable containers, but these will need to be painted or otherwise blended into the set. Don't take chances on starting a fire and, to be extra safe, have a fire extinguisher or water available.

In order to get the flash paper charges, the lighting fire and explosion effects, the fog maker or dry ice smoke all going at the time and manage to get it on film . . . you may need a few friends to help out. But that's a good excuse to get together (it's winter anyway) and while they have fun playing army, you'll get some exciting action on film. □

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The Bell & Howell/Mamiya Company's new MS45 offers an entirely new approach to the design of Super-8 cameras and provides a solution to one of our format's most troublesome dilemmas: how to get your camera's skills to grow with yours.

Beginning filmmakers are tempted by simple, inexpensive fool-proof cameras that will give acceptable results with a minimum of effort. At the same time, we serious filmmaker types balk at the limitations imposed on our ambitions by overly simplified cameras. We want a more sophisticated system to work with.

As the new filmmaker becomes more and more involved in making movies, he or she wants a more interesting and controllable camera, which means shelling out money a second time. Bell & Howell solves this problem of catering to both the beginner and the serious filmmaker, and allows for a filmmaker's skills to grow—all with the same camera.

Unlimited Simplicity

I call the MS45 modular camera system "unlimited simplicity." First you start with the basic camera, the MS45, then you have a choice of three electronic modules to attach.

The basic MS45 has a fast $f/1.2$ lens with a 4:1 zoom (8.5–34mm) and macro focusing. There's a dichroic rangefinder (color fringing) for manual focusing, a 225-degree (XL) shutter for low light filming and a color coded LED readout screen in the viewfinder for information on all operations and conditions. With a 50-foot maximum film capacity, the camera weighs in at a light 2.5 lbs. and its handy pistol grip folds up for tripod and storage ease. These attributes are basic and unalterable in the new Bell & Howell design, and if you can learn to live with their limitations you won't be confined by any others.

Off the shelf the MS45 has auto exposure (only), and auto level control (only) for the sound system. A single running speed of 18

fps completes the rather simple picture and even first-timers should get decent image and sound. But if you're not satisfied with your first filming results, just send the unedited roll to Bell & Howell and—under their "Perfect Movie Guarantee"—they'll send you a cartridge of fresh film and a processing mailer. (Imagine the millions that could have been saved on films like *Apocalypse Now* if 35mm manufacturers gave similar guarantees.)

The one area of potential difficulty for a beginner would probably be in focusing the MS45. So the first option he or she might want would be an automatic focusing system and Bell & Howell offers a modular unit for that very purpose which neatly snaps on under the lens. If, on

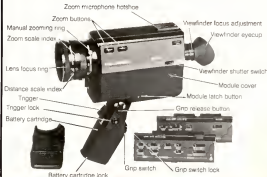
the other hand, you catch on to the dichroic system quickly, and most of your shots are sharp, you can avoid that added expense.

Step By Step

So, you enjoy making films and you'd like to go further with it. By snapping on the CM2 feature module to the side of the camera, you can shoot fast or slow motion and have options of 24 fps or single-frame filming. You'll also be able to do fades and manually control your exposure and sound level.

That's not enough, you say. You need a PC/flash contact for double-system sound recording. You want to shoot in-camera dissolves of picture and sound as well as master the magic of interval-timed photography.

BELL & HOWELL MS45 CAMERA



The Facts in Brief

Lens: $f/1.2$, 8.5–34mm macro lens; manual zoom.

Focus: TTL manual dichroic focusing. Auto focusing with auto-focus module.

Speeds: 18 fps. Slow motion, 24 fps, 9 fps and single-frame with feature modules.

Shutter: 225 degrees for low light filming.

Exposure: Auto exposure. Manual exposure control with feature modules. Fades and dissolves with feature modules.

Sound: Auto level control. Manual level control and tone control with feature modules. PC/flash contact with one feature module.

Special Features: Modular camera system with one auto-focus module and two feature modules. Total information LED viewfinder.

Suggested Retail Price: MS45 \$429.95; AF1 auto-focus module: \$185.95; CM4 feature module: \$129.95; CM2 feature module: \$89.95.

CIRCLE INFOCARD 15

Well, these important options, plus all features of the CM2 are incorporated in the CM4 module. (The CM4 is interchangeable with the CM2 and snaps on in exactly the same place.) If you want to delay your camera's start for 10 or 20 seconds to get into the shot yourself, the CM4 makes that possible, too.

The concept is rather ingenious and it's as close as we've come to custom-made cameras in Super-8. Hopefully other manufacturers will continue the trend.

Here and Now

Surprisingly, my biggest criticism of Bell & Howell's MS4S concerns what you *can't* do with it. The top doesn't flip out of the way to accept 200-foot cartridges. The power zoom doesn't operate unless you're shooting film (the opposite would almost be preferable). And the lens is not interchangeable. Fixed zoom lenses don't usually bother me, but in such a full featured camera you'd expect more than a 4:1 zoom ratio. However, since the macro on this camera is at the wide-angle end of the zoom, it should be possible to use a macro aspheric adapter to get extremely wide angle coverage. To my knowledge, Bell & Howell has not yet announced such an accessory. I'd like to be able to clip on a module that made the running noise of the camera go away.

So we're left with a Super-8 camera that can be purchased in "parts" to suit your filming style and your needs, but with a few basic non-interchangeable limitations that keep it from being the ultimate answer for everyone.

Those who try it will find that both the picture and sound quality are good. If financial or other restrictions cause them to buy just the basic camera at first, they will have something to look forward to with the auto-focus and feature modules. □

For more information on the Bell & Howell MS4S camera, write to:
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DECEMBER

The Independent Film and Video Distribution Center. In process of compiling two 13-hour packages of independent film and video to be distributed to public television stations in 1981. Screenings for possible inclusion will take place in November/December 1980. Open to 16mm and 34-mch videotape primarily, but will consider Super-8 and 1/2-inch videotape of acceptable technical quality for national satellite feed. For more information and submission details, contact: Douglas Cruickshank, Acquisitions Coordinator, Independent Film and Video Distribution Center, P.O. Box 6060, Boulder, CO 80306. (303) 449-5234.

London Amateur Film Festival. February 27 to March 1 in London, England. *Entry deadline* December 30. Sponsored by Institute of Amateur Cinematographers. Open to Super-8, Single-8, Regular-8 and 16mm. Entry fee: \$5 plus return postage. Trophy, certificates and other awards. Contact: R. Wainwright, Comp. Officer, 110 Selbourne Rd., Southgate, London N14, England.

The Writers Guild of America, East Foundation, Inc. Will award eight fellowships of \$3,500 each for persons to write scripts or screenplays for television or film. Contact: The Foundation/Writers Guild of America East, Inc., 555 West 57 St., 12th Floor, New York, NY 10019.

IAC International Film Competition. *Entry deadline* December 31. Open to Regular-8, Super-8, 9.5mm and 16mm. Entry fee: \$5 plus customs duties and return postage. Contact: Roy Wainwright, 63 Woodfield Lane, Ashted, Surrey, England.

JANUARY

National Endowment for the Humanities, Media Program. Applicants for grants should make preliminary contact with NEH to verify appropriateness of suggested proposals, and request guidelines. *Entry deadline* January 8. Contact: Media Program, Div. of Public Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities, 806 15th St., Washington, DC 20506. (202) 724-0318.

Second Quebec International Super-8 Film Festival. February 5-8 in Montreal, Canada. *Entry deadline* January 10. Open to Super-8. Entry fee: \$5. Cash prizes. Contact: Richard Clark, 9155 St. Hubert, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2M 1Y8. (514) 389-5921.

1981 Ohio University Film Conference. April 22-25 in Athens, Ohio. Theme: "Film History Industry... Style, Ideology." *Entry deadline* for papers January 19. Send two copies of a 15-minute or 10-15 page, double-spaced paper and 100-word abstract. For details of panels, contact: Stephen Andrews, Conference Coordinator, Ohio University Film Conference, P.O. Box 388, Athens, OH 45701.

FEBRUARY

Ann Arbor 8mm Film Festival. February 13-15 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Entry deadline* February 1. Open to Super-8, Single-8 and Regular-8. Entry fee: \$5. Must not have been previously entered in this festival. \$2,400 in cash and other prizes. Contact: Tim Arst, Ann Arbor Film Co-op, P.O. Box 7592, Ann Arbor, MI 48107. (313) 665-6569 or 769-7787.

Australia's Ten Best on Eight. February/March in Melbourne, Australia. *Entry deadline* February 11. Open to Super-8 and Regular-8. Trophies and special awards. 30-minute limit. Contact: D. C. Wood, Festival Director, 12-14 Tunnock St., North Balwyn, Victoria 3104, Australia.

MARCH

Los Angeles Film Teachers' Jr. Student Film Festival. April 6-11 and April 28 in Los Angeles, California. *Entry deadline* March 23. Open to Super-8, Single-8 and Regular-8. Prizes include animation cels, splinters, film, posters, studio tours and theater passes. 6-minute limit. Age range of entrants kindergarten to 9th grade. Contact: Brenda Norman, Jr. Student Film Festival, Box 5539, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.

AECT National Student Media Festival. April 8 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Entry deadline* March 1. Open to Super-8, Single-8, 35mm slides, 1/2-inch and 3/4-inch videotape. 10-minute limit. Students only. Contact: Dr. William D. Schmidt, AECT National Student Media Festival, Instructional Media Center, Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA 98926.

If your organization has news of an upcoming film festival, conference or film school event, please let us know at least three months in advance of the event. Write SUPER-8 FILMAKER, 609 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105.

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55

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CM-300

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1014XL-S

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AF514XL-S

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CIRCLE INFOCARD 13



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